LIBRARY
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

THE Nation

AMERICA'S LEADING LIBERAL WEEKLY SINCE 1865

VOLUME 153 NEW YORK · SATURDAY · OCTOBER 18, 1941 NUMBER 16

IN THIS ISSUE

THE SHAPE OF THINGS 357

EDITORIALS

Split Hairs and Tapped Wires 360
China on the Offensive 361
Congress and Russia *by Freda Kirchwey* 361

ARTICLES

Making Defense Safe for Alcoa. III. *by I. F. Stone* 363
Imagination and the War *by Robert Bendiner* 365
The Undiscoverables. II. The Dark Multitude *by Ralph Bates* 368
Defense Changes America. I. The New Technical Revolution *by Alden Stevens* 371
Everybody's Business *by Keith Hutchison* 373
In the Wind 374
A Native at Large *by Jonathan Daniels* 375

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

The Classic Traitor *by Albert Guérard* 376
Four Critics *by Jacques Barzun* 376
Mark Howe, Bostonian *by Odell Shepard* 378
Waldo Frank's Latest Novel *by Paul Rosenfeld* 378
The Life of a Planter *by Grace Adams* 379
Drama: The Fires of Spring *by Joseph Wood Krutch* 381
Records *by B. H. Haggin* 381

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS 384

FREDA KIRCHWEY
Editor and Publisher

ROBERT BENDINER *Managing Editor* I. F. STONE *Washington Editor* MARGARET MARSHALL *Literary Editor*

KEITH HUTCHISON, MAXWELL STEWART, *Associate Editors*
RICHARD H. ROVERE, *Assistant Editor*
JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH, *Dramatic Critic*
B. H. HAGGIN, *Music Critic*

BOARD OF CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

NORMAN ANGELL • JONATHAN DANIELS • LOUIS FISCHER
REINHOLD NIEBUHR • J. ALVAREZ DEL VAYO

HUGO VAN ARX, *Business Manager*
MARY HOWARD ELLISON, *Advertising Manager*

Published weekly and copyright, 1941, in the U. S. A. by The Nation, Inc., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter, December 13, 1879, at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Washington Editorial Bureau: 856 National Press Building.

The Shape of Things

THE GERMAN DRIVE TOWARD MOSCOW IS being accompanied by an all-out offensive of the German propaganda department. Although it is certain that the Red Army is fighting every inch of the way, that if Moscow falls at all it will only be at the cost of huge German losses, Goebbels is making tremendous and noisy efforts to depict the battle as a walkover. The communiqués of the High Command and still more the reports of the Nazi press are spiced with almost astronomical figures of prisoners taken and material captured. Every effort is being made to persuade the world that there is little left for the Reichswehr to do in Russia except mop up what remains of the Soviet armies. At the same time Herr Funk, Economics Minister of the Reich, starting with the confident assumption that the bear is safely caught, has been telling the German people about his plans for utilizing the skin and carcass. What is the meaning of this loud trumpeting before the walls of Moscow? To those practiced in interpreting Nazi propaganda methods it suggests that Hitler is truly making an all-out effort in the present campaign but is doubtful whether it can be won by arms alone. Hence the attempt to spread defeatism among the Russians by exaggerated claims and to impress on Britain and America that it is already too late to send material help. No doubt this propaganda campaign is also tuned to the mood of the German people. It is probably becoming increasingly hard to disguise the number of casualties suffered in the Russian war, and it is therefore important to offset this depressing fact by encouraging the belief that the fighting is nearly over and the promised land in sight.

✶

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS STATED that it is compiling dossiers on Germans responsible for murder and oppression in the occupied lands. We can hardly hope that this action will influence the behavior of men like Reinhard Heydrich, the Butcher of Prague, but the news may serve as a warning to their few collaborators in the occupied countries, and it will help to cheer those who are putting up such a stout resistance. The spirit of revolt is not being quenched by the Gestapo's reign of terror. There are reports that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Norway, where patriots have hitherto confined themselves to passive resistance and sabotage, one or more guerrilla bands are now operating against German communications. In Yugoslavia the *Chetniks* are waging almost a full-scale war and have forced the Germans and Italians to abandon some of their positions and to concentrate in the larger towns. Among the many reports is one of a battle at Sabac, where a large force of Germans succeeded in capturing the town only after five assaults in which dive-bombers, artillery, and tanks were employed. And even then the Serbians, fighting a tenacious rearguard action, were able to withdraw most of their men in safety. The turbulent state of Yugoslavia must be seriously impeding Nazi plans for the economic exploitation of that country. Before its invasion of Yugoslavia last spring Germany drew from it important quantities of goods and minerals. In dividing the spoils with Mussolini Hitler kept for himself the most economically valuable provinces, but thanks to the courageous opposition of the population, it is probable that he has gained less in loot than he lost in trade.

✶

THE TURKISH-GERMAN TRADE AGREEMENT, signed at Ankara on October 9, turned out to be a rather surprising diplomatic setback for the Reich. Although many of the details of the treaty have not been revealed, the quantities of products to be exchanged are small. Germany was particularly anxious to obtain substantial amounts of chrome ore for its munitions industries, but Turkey flatly refused to break its agreement with Britain allotting that country the whole of its 1941 and 1942 production. The Nazis then demanded, as a minimum, 150,000 tons of the metal, or approximately half of the 1943-44 production. This also was refused by the Turks, and the Germans finally settled for 90,000 tons, to be delivered over a two-year period starting in 1943. Even this limited amount is not to be shipped unless Germany turns over 18,000,000 lire worth of German war materials before the end of 1942. Since the bargain is obviously of little value to the Nazis, the question arises why they troubled to make it. Possibly the German economy is in such a straitened condition that Hitler no longer dares ignore even petty gains.

✶

THE BLOODLESS REVOLUTION IN PANAMA has removed from office one of the outstanding pro-Nazi politicians of Latin America, Dr. Arnulfo Arias, who since he became President a year ago has been attempting to remodel the small republic on a totalitarian basis. The new President, Ricardo Adopho de la Guardia, has declared that he intends to govern in accordance with democratic principles and that he will collaborate in the defense of the continent, maintaining "the greatest respect for contractual obligations with the United States." The full story of the revolution is not known as we write. It appears that early in the morning of October 7, less than twenty-four hours after his Cabinet had taken a slap at the United States by prohibiting the arming of ships on the Panama registry, Dr. Arias,using an assumed name, quietly boarded a plane and flew to Cuba. When his absence became known, some of his colleagues in the government decided that he had vacated his post by leaving the country and took steps to appoint a new President. German propagandists are already blaming Washington for engineering the overturn of Arias, but the State Department seems to have been genuinely taken by surprise. Perhaps some credit, however, should be given to Raymond Gram Swing, who on the evening of October 7 broadcast a remarkable exposure of the pro-Axis tendencies of the ex-President.

✶

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MEXICO AND our own government is a fair one and should do much to dispel the suspicion and hostility that have long impaired the relations of the two countries. Mexico will make a cash payment in settlement of claims arising from the expropriation of land by previous administrations. While the larger problem of arriving at a settlement with Standard and other oil companies has not been solved, Mexico has offered to make a $9,000,000 payment on account. For its part, the United States will advance $30,000,000 for completion of the Pan-American highway and other roads needed for hemispheric defense, and utilize the stabilization fund to protect the value of the peso. We are also pledged to increase our purchases of Mexican silver. A comprehensive trade agreement is expected to be concluded in the near future. The significance of the accord between North America's two great republics can best be appreciated if one recalls the sharp, uncompromising notes that were exchanged between the two governments only two or three years ago. It is true that our oil companies are still wholly unrealistic in their claims on the Mexican government, but now that this agreement has been reached they may find it to their advantage to whittle down their demands to a reasonable basis.

✶

"THE ROTTENEST CONTRACT EVER SIGNED by the government with anyone" is the way Senator Harry S. Truman characterized the agreement between Jesse Jones and the Aluminum Company of America in an interview recently with the independent and hard-hitting St. Louis *Star-Times*. Senator Truman, who deserves the nation's gratitude for the work he has done as chairman of the Senate committee inquiring into defense, says he will recommend abrogation of the contract. This week we publish the final article of I. F. Stone's series

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the Alcoa contract. The first two were called to the attention of the House last week and inserted in the *Congressional Record* by Congressman Walter M. Pierce of Oregon, one of the Northwest's leading progressives. With Congressmen Coffee and Leavy of Washington, Congressman Pierce has fought to keep control of the great new power projects in the Northwest in the hands of the people and to break monopolistic barriers to the exploitation of its resources for defense. We are sorry that Congressman Jerry Voorhis of California, who is usually with them, saw fit to deliver a half-hearted defense of the RFC during discussion of the Alcoa contract and the articles on the floor of the House. Voorhis thought that but for the "patriotic action" of men in the RFC the contract might have been worse. We suppose Alcoa might also have been given, along with the other concessions, a second mortgage on the White House.

*

FEDERAL JUDGE FRANCIS J. CAFFEY'S decision in the government's anti-trust suit against the Aluminum Company of America could hardly have been more satisfactory to the company if it had been written by one of its own press agents. We not only disagree with the decision and hope Thurman Arnold will be permitted to appeal it, but we find some of the Judge's more sentimental disquisitions more than we can stomach. The fact that Arthur V. Davis started with the company as a laborer in overalls "and not infrequently was forced to whistle for his pay" may prove something —perhaps the need for stricter wage-payment laws—but we can't see that it has anything to do with the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Judge Caffey finds that there is plenty of bauxite and plenty of water-power and therefore no monopoly of aluminum, which is made from a combination of the two. By the same reasoning, the Dow Chemical Company had no monopoly of magnesium because there is plenty of brine in the sea from which to make magnesium. Judge Caffey thinks some of the complainants against Alcoa were "wishful thinkers." Fear of being cited for contempt of court restrains us from adding a candidate of our own to the list.

*

THE RESTRICTIONS PUT ON NON-DEFENSE building by the Supply Priorities and Allocation Board are bound to cause considerable hardship, no matter how liberally the order is enforced. Needed home building and private construction will be curtailed and tens of thousands of building-trades employees thrown temporarily out of work. Yet the restrictions are essential if the defense program and aid to the countries resisting aggression are to be stepped up to the necessary level. We can only wish that the OPM had recognized the problem earlier. We cannot forget that less than a year ago OPM experts were saying that our supplies of aluminum and steel were adequate for the emergency. Automobile production, which consumes vast quantities of steel, chromium, aluminum, and other strategic metals, was allowed to proceed undisturbed until two months ago. The present restrictions were probably inescapable; the blunders of the OPM have not only intensified the need for civilian sacrifices but have retarded the entire defense program.

*

THE CURRIER CASE—INVOLVING A COMPANY of that name whose bid for constructing 300 defense houses in Michigan was rejected by the Office of Production Management though it was 44 per cent lower than the next lowest bid—is being whipped up into a simple political scandal. As a matter of fact, the real issue is the very complicated one of technological advance and its relation to employment. The great majority of construction workers in this country belong to the craft unions of the American Federation of Labor; they have a vested interest in the old method of building houses for the understandable, though shortsighted, reason that it means more jobs for such craftsmen as bricklayers and carpenters. They oppose prefabrication for the same reason that they have in the past supported the use of bricks rather than steel. It is easy enough to say that since the labor cost of prefabrication is so much less than that of building on the site, the OPM should disregard the A. F. of L., risk its threats of nation-wide strikes, and accept such bids as that of the Currier Company. Instead, Sidney Hillman last year made an agreement with the A. F. of L. building trades by which the unions undertook to prevent strikes and Mr. Hillman agreed to establish minimum standards and set up a board to settle disputes. It is this agreement that is now being challenged by Thurman Arnold, on the ground that it amounts to giving the A. F. of L. a monopoly, and by the Currier Company. There is also a jurisdictional dispute involved. The employees of the Currier Company are members of a building-trades union, the United Construction Workers, a C. I. O. affiliate organized by A. D. Lewis, brother of John L. Its wage scales are reported to be lower than those of the A. F. of L. unions, and in general its policy seems to be primarily to undermine the A. F. of L. even at the price of giving unwarranted concessions to employers.

*

PREFABRICATED HOUSING IS IN THE CARDS. But we agree with John M. Carmody that the sudden shift to prefabrication would involve a revolution in the building industry; it would also involve devastating strikes and at least temporary unemployment. We think the A. F. of L. is wrong in opposing prefabricated housing; and neither the taxpayer nor the consumer should be compelled to bear the cost of that opposition. On the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other hand, we can understand why Sidney Hillman was eager to stabilize the relations between OPM and the dominant unions in the field. The problem can only be resolved, in our opinion, by a carefully and coolly devised program providing for the introduction of prefabrication at a pace which would cushion the hardships of technological unemployment. Such a program would take into account the interests of the craft-union workers, the consumer, and the taxpayer; and it would give short shrift to jurisdictional disputes.

*

THE ARREST OF GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK after his indictment by a federal grand jury should put an end to the long and improbable career of the most successful German propagandist in this country. Viereck was no Nazi hack grinding out Jew-baiting leaflets in the back room of a Yorkville beer hall. As a matter of fact, it was exactly because he was not a genuine Nazi at all that he proved so valuable to Hitler. The son of a well-known German socialist, he developed a passionate desire to mingle with and be part of the Prussian aristocracy. During the World War he gave up what might have been a literary career of some distinction and became editor of several pro-German propaganda sheets. His faith persisted after the war, and he kept on publishing one of these papers until 1927. When the Nazis came to power, he went along. For the last eight years he has been editing the smooth productions of the German Library of Information, and, perhaps more important, he has been dressing up Nazi propositions and selling them to magazines of immense circulation. An amiable and polished operator, he has been used by the Nazis to win support, not among the Coughlinite rabble, but among isolationist Congressmen and wealthy appeasers. The story of his connections should make interesting reading; it should also earn him a long retirement.

*

FOR YEARS NOW THE GENTLEMEN IN THE British Foreign Office and the American State Department have been flirting with that old gallant, General Franco, in the hope of winning him away from his fierce guardians, Hitler and Mussolini. The British seem to have realized at last that their serenades under the Spanish balcony of the New Order are a waste of breath and they have actually been so ungentlemanly as to refuse visas for Bermuda to four Mexicans who were invited to Madrid by Franco to take part in the Council of Hispanidad. The council was sponsored by the Spanish Phalanx and was avowedly called to map out a totalitarian propaganda campaign for the Western Hemisphere. One of the jobs of the State Department is to combat such propaganda, and one might think that Franco's blatant move would have been checked. But the four Mexicans had no trouble getting American transit visas.

Split Hairs and Tapped Wires

THE Attorney General of the United States is supposed to enforce the law. At a recent press conference Attorney General Biddle said he would permit Department of Justice agents to tap wires in four classes of cases. These four classes of cases—espionage, sabotage, kidnaping, and extortion—are the classes specified in HR 4228, the bill sponsored by the Department of Justice to legalize wire-tapping. That bill was defeated. Do the Attorney General and the Department of Justice regard themselves as above the law?

Mr. Biddle seeks in advance to clear himself of the charge of official lawlessness. He splits a very fine hair. The law which forbids wire-tapping makes it a criminal offense to "divulge and publish" any information obtained in that way. "The question is," Mr. Biddle said at his press conference, "what is meant by 'divulge and publish.' I cannot think that by these words Congress intended to prevent an agent tapping wires in an espionage case and reporting to his superiors. . . ." In our opinion if Congress did not mean that, it would have said so. In libel law the mere dictation of a libelous letter to a secretary has been held to constitute "publication." The tapping of a wire and the reporting of information so obtained to an FBI or Department of Justice official is certainly "divulgence."

One need not split this hair with Mr. Biddle. The law also forbids the "use" of any information obtained by wire-tapping. If the information cannot be used, why tap the wires? Or does the Department of Justice intend to use the information in violation of the law? The truth is that the department has been violating the law for some time. The discovery of wire-tapping in the Bridges case confirms current gossip in Washington of the widespread use of wire-tapping and the unguarded admissions of it made from time to time by officials. The FBI is not the only agency doing it. Naval Intelligence has also been reliably reported to be tapping wires.

Mr. Biddle's statement may be a bold effort to take the offensive before new embarrassing revelations are made. He has already shown by his inaction on the proved wire-tapping in the Bridges case by FBI men that he does not intend to enforce the law in his own department. As an interpreter of the law, he also leaves much to be desired. Before the Senate Judiciary Committee on September 3 he testified that the present law applies only to foreign and interstate communications. The second clause of Section 605 of the Communications Act and the Supreme Court's decision in *Weiss* v. *U. S.* show that the law applies to intrastate telephone calls as well.

Does the Department of Justice intend to obey the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

law or doesn't it? Is the department run by the Attorney General or by J. Edgar Hoover? Mr. Biddle indicated that Mr. Jackson relaxed the department's rule against wire-tapping "and that he would follow Jackson's policy." Mr. Jackson admitted only one case of wire-tapping after March 15, 1940, and assured press and public that he would henceforth forbid any wire-tapping. On September 3, a few weeks after it was revealed that FBI agents had tapped Harry Bridges's telephone in New York, Mr. Biddle assured the Senate Judiciary Committee that he had not changed this rule. Now he indicates that he will authorize wire-tapping by the FBI provided the information is "divulged" only to superior officers.

Since the FBI, in enforcing the Hatch Act against Communists, has held a knowledge of anthropology suspicious and a reading of *The Nation, PM,* or the *New Republic* evidence of subversive tendencies, we shudder to think of what its agents will do with this new authorization. We hope Mr. Biddle will be called to account in Congress and taught that the first duty of an Attorney General is to obey the law himself.

China on the Offensive

DURING the past few weeks there has been greater military activity in China than at any other time since the fall of Hankow in 1938. Late in September the Japanese launched two major drives on cities which had held out against them through four and a quarter years of war. The first was directed against Changsha, capital of the rich rice-producing province of Hunan, in many respects the most important Chinese city not in Japanese hands. It will be recalled that an effort was made to take the city immediately after the capture of Hankow and that a panic-stricken Chinese general ordered large sections of the city burned. But the Japanese failed to reach the city either on that occasion or in 1939, when a second major effort was made. The operations this year were on a much larger scale than in either of the previous years. According to the Chinese, the invaders crossed the Milo River north of Changsha in four columns, employing some 100,000 troops. They were permitted to advance to within five or six miles of the city, then were attacked simultaneously from the front and from both flanks. The Japanese succeeded in gaining a foothold in the town but were thrown back and forced ultimately to retreat some ninety miles.

This drive was quickly followed by a second—against Chengchow. In the spring of 1938, after capturing Hsuchow, the Japanese were prevented from taking the strategic railway center of Chengchow when the Chinese broke the dykes on the Yellow River. Chengchow is the point at which the east-west Lunghai railway—running to Sian—crosses the north-south Peiping-Hankow railway. Like Changsha it had resisted all attacks. But now the Japanese have succeeded in taking it, although they admit that the Chinese are counter-attacking within five miles of the city.

The news of Chengchow's fall had scarcely reached Tokyo when it became known that the Chinese had started a drive against Ichang—the most important Yangtze River port between Hankow and Chungking. Chinese attacks are also reported against Shasi, sixty miles down river from Ichang, and against Sinyang and Suihsien. These moves are part of the first full-scale Chinese offensive to be launched since the beginning of the war. Its success is still in doubt. Ichang was actually held for three days, but the Chinese forces were compelled to evacuate the city after the Japanese, according to Chungking dispatches, attacked it with gas and aerial bombs. The attempt to recapture Chengchow, however, is being pressed home. Whatever the outcome of this campaign, the significant fact is China's ability to take the offensive. As the tragic ending of the Spanish war so clearly showed, successful defense is rarely enough to win a war. The Japanese army is not likely to evacuate China willingly; it will have to be thrown out. The armies of Chiang Kai-shek have not yet the equipment to do this, but if they are given tanks, airplanes, artillery, and other weapons in sufficient quantities, there is every reason to believe that they can finish the job.

Any assistance that we give to China should pay immediate dividends in preventing Japan from attacking the British in Burma and Singapore or the Soviets in Siberia. With American, Dutch, and British oil cut off entirely, Japan is likely to find itself increasingly busy merely holding the territory it has overrun in China.

Congress and Russia

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

THE only good thing that is coming out of the slaughter in Russia is a mood of desperation. America acts only when it is in the grip of such moods. Disasters are the fuel that set this country in motion. As the Nazi lines on the newspaper maps bulge toward Rzhev and Vyazma and Kalnya and Chern, forming deep scallops converging on Moscow, as the wave of fighting sweeps through the south toward the coal of the Donetz basin and the oil of the Caucasus, the terrible urgency of the crisis begins to stir even the sluggish imaginations in Washington. No longer can Congressmen take comfort in the solid resistance of the Soviet armies while debating the propriety of encouraging godlessness with American tanks. The Russian armies are in retreat. They are fighting like heroes; they are forcing the Germans to pay an admittedly heavy price for every foot gained; they are, as far as we know, holding their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ranks as they fall back. But they are in retreat on every front except that around Leningrad. And the House of Representatives by a large majority has passed the new lend-lease appropriation of almost $6 billion, and the bill is expected to go through the Senate this week with only a little more difficulty. The measures introduced in both houses to amend the neutrality law according to the President's request of last Thursday are expected to meet greater opposition, and the America Firsters have promised a hot campaign against the amendment, but no one seriously doubts that it will also be adopted. For the moment, at least, the Congress is shocked out of its chronic state of anxious indecision. Even though Hitler's armies are heading east, the fall of Moscow would echo louder in the marble corridors of the Capitol than anything that has happened since the defeat of France.

But that is not saying much; at best it is a silver lining of poor quality. In spite of the urgency of the President's warning he dared not ask for the repeal of the Neutrality Act as a whole or even for the repeal of Section 2 prohibiting American ships from going into war zones. He recommended to the "earnest and early attention" of Congress the "correction" of other provisions of the law, but he limited his request for action to Section 6, which prohibits the arming of American-flag ships engaged in foreign commerce. The repeal of this single provision marks the limit of Congressional tolerance according to the expert estimate of the President and the party leaders of both houses. Undoubtedly he will follow the adoption of this amendment with a recommendation of further action. But the fact that this single, extremely small step is all he thinks it wise to propose at this moment is a depressing revelation of the capacity of our representatives to grasp the crisis we face.

I believe, as I have always believed, that the inertia of Congress, which reflects while it exaggerates the inertia of the country, should be dealt with more courageously. I don't question the accuracy with which the President registers its mood; I disagree with his judgment as to how that mood should be met. He plays safe when he should be bold. He is too good a politician to be as good a leader as he should be. With Hitler's bloody triumphs to help him, he could, I believe, have demanded total repeal of the Neutrality Act. The isolationists would have made more noise; they might have created delay and given the Nazi press some defeatist items to gloat over; they could not have prevented repeal. And even the delay would have been less than may now result from the step-by-step tactics the President and his advisers have chosen to adopt.

When Mr. Roosevelt told Congress "solemnly" that if Hitler's present military plans are successful "we Americans shall be forced to fight in defense of our homes and our freedom in a war as costly and as devastating as that which now rages on the Russian front," he spoke a truth so appalling that it would have fully justified a request for a declaration of war. Surely, on the basis of such a warning, he could at least have demanded the wiping out of a law which embodies a concept so grotesquely unreal as that of American neutrality. If he had done so he would have had a fight on his hands, it is true; but he has not always dodged fights, even losing ones. And this one he would not have lost.

Meanwhile goods will flow to Russia in what the President calls a "constant stream." Already, he tells us, the kinds and quantities of material promised for October will be shipped on schedule. And Lord Beaverbrook, in a remarkable report on the British-American mission to Moscow, expressed absolute confidence in the will and capacity of the two nations to supply Russia's growing needs. This is heartening and not to be entirely discounted. But lurking in the minds of all who have watched Nazi progress during two years of war are two disturbing questions. Can the democracies, slow to move, divided, impeded by distance and difficult communications, pressed by the still unfulfilled needs of Britain, possibly give Russia what it must have—the "30,000 tanks" so hopefully promised by Beaverbrook and proportionate quantities of other weapons? Can the British launch anywhere an offensive strong enough to ease the pressure on the eastern front until substantial help can reach the Soviets? These questions do not answer themselves. The best—though belated—efforts of Britain and the United States may not suffice to get supplies to Russia before the equipment of the Soviet armies is exhausted. As for an offensive, the British obviously have not dared attempt one. Even in North Africa their troops have made no move during the precious months of Nazi advance in Russia. Undoubtedly they have been reorganizing their forces and preparing to meet the next German drive, but they have shown no signs of intending to take the initiative. Nothing is more dangerous than to play the desk-chair strategist; it may be that the only possible course for Britain was one of inaction. But if that is the fact, it is a most alarming fact. It means Hitler has no second front to worry about, except that created by the R. A. F.; it means Britain is too weak to start an offensive even though major strategy may urgently demand one. And if the facts are different—if the British have held back out of timidity or lack of realistic leadership—then the crisis is even more acute. Russia is not going to win this war alone. It must have quick and decisive help from Britain and from the United States or it will go under; and if it is defeated, the position of the United States, not to mention Britain, will be desperate—as the President clearly told Congress.

Is it not time our representatives thought in terms larger than the amendment of a single section of a single act?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Making Defense Safe for Alcoa

BY I. F. STONE

III

Washington, October 8

WHEN G. R. Gibbons, senior vice-president of the Aluminum Company of America, was before the Truman committee last May, he was asked about the famous press release in which Stettinius had assured the country we had ample aluminum. At the time the Stettinius statement was issued, Alcoa was already unable to fill orders promptly. "Reading that release," Hugh Fulton, counsel of the committee, asked Gibbons, "in the light of what you have testified as to the facts which the Aluminum Company then knew, if it saw that release, it knew that release was not correct, did it not?" Gibbons was evasive, arrogant, and smug. "I might have seen the release," he replied, "and thought it was quite correct because I might have thought the war would be over in three months, in which case there would be more than enough aluminum for civilian needs." He went on to ask a rhetorical question which reveals the attitude of mind of Alcoa in approaching the problem of defense. "Suppose," Gibbons asked, "England was immediately conquered, as it looked very much as though it would be at times, and the war should suddenly subside, where would we land?" The "we" is not you and I, who would "land" in a situation where aluminum would be cheaper and more plentiful than it ever was before, but the Aluminum Company of America.

It may be that Alcoa feels the same way today. It may be that its officials have been talking the same kind of "realistic" defeatism to Jesse Jones. I was told in a responsible quarter that Jesse Jones believes there may soon be a "negotiated peace," a euphemism for a Nazi victory. Whether the story is true or not, Jones has certainly played his part in holding up our aluminum program. Congressman Walter M. Pierce of Oregon, one of the few members of the House with the courage to criticize the RFC head, recently translated the delay into terms of planes. "To date," he said on September 23, "137 days, or 37½ per cent of a year's production, have been wasted in the effort to protect Alcoa's monopolistic position. On 235,000 kilowatts, this is equivalent to 50,000 tons of aluminum. One light fighter takes 5 tons of aluminum and a bomber 30 tons. This delay is the equivalent of 10,000 fighters or 1,665 bombers." The clatter of pots and pans has helped to distract attention from the dilatory procedure of the RFC and the OPM. The pots-and-pans campaign brought in 11,500,000 pounds of aluminum, which is equal to about one week's production when and if the promised 600,000,000-pound expansion program gets under way.

The war in which millions are bleeding on the Russian plain and millions more await renewed assault in the British Isles is not the war which concerns Alcoa. Alcoa is concerned with "where do we land?" Abroad it has been forced to give hostages to Hitler in the shape of its investments in Norway, Germany, the Low Countries, France, Spain, Italy, and the Balkans. If Hitler wins, Alcoa must do business with the conqueror. It is subject to his reprisals. At home Alcoa must make sure that if we win the war Alcoa does not lose its control of aluminum. The war which is of primary concern to the international Mellon aluminum empire is the war to maintain its possessions abroad and its power over the precious light metal at home. In the prosecution of this private war Alcoa has had the cooperation of Jesse Jones, of the OPM, and of the War Department. The War Department last year sent a delegation to Secretary Ickes to ask him not to grant Bonneville power to Reynolds Metals, Alcoa's competitor. W. Averell Harriman accompanied the delegation, and War Department engineers have cooperated with Alcoa engineers in picking the sites it preferred in the Northwest. The American people may some day pay a terrible price for a state of affairs in which the defense of their country is subordinated to the defense of Alcoa.

With competing plants about to be financed by the government, how does Alcoa intend to maintain its control over aluminum? The first answer is that it intends to delay the construction of these plants as long as it can. The second, as I showed in my previous articles, is that Alcoa intends to operate new government plants as a yardstick in reverse. Costs will be so padded as to keep the price of aluminum high, and allow a wide margin of profit on Alcoa's low-cost plants. The third answer is that Alcoa intends to make alumina its second line of defense. Bauxite is first made into alumina, then alumina into aluminum. Two pounds of alumina are required for every pound of aluminum, and Alcoa, with the aid of the OPM and Jesse Jones, will fight to prevent any other company from making the alumina needed for the new 600,000,000-pound expansion program. The contract between Jesse Jones and Alcoa calls for a 400,000,000-pound alumina plant, enough for 200,000,000 pounds of aluminum. The contract provides that alumina made in this new government-owned alumina

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plant cannot be sold to the new government-owned aluminum plants except at a price satisfactory to Alcoa, and no surplus alumina can be sold to anyone else except on Alcoa's terms. The OPM has recommended the construction of another 600,000,000 pounds of alumina capacity to Jones, and the same provision will almost certainly be in the new contract unless protest is strong. Control of alumina would enable Alcoa to control its new competitors in aluminum.

Alcoa is fighting not only to control alumina but to maintain its near-monopoly in bauxite by hampering the development of methods to extract alumina from our huge alunite deposits in the Northwest and from low-grade alumina-bearing clays in the South. In this it has the cooperation of the OPM and the RFC, and I intend to go into this aspect of the aluminum problem on another occasion. Alcoa is also trying to get the job of building any aluminum plants to be operated by competitors and to pick the sites for these plants. One may reasonably suspect that both the methods of construction and the choice of the site may be affected by Alcoa's own interests. Some of its potential competitors seem to think so, too, and while the OPM claims that it does not care who constructs the new aluminum plants, there was a significant note of annoyance in Bunker's testimony on the Olin Corporation. The Olin Corporation is supposed to be one of Alcoa's competitors under the 600,000,000-pound expansion program. Bunker is the $60,000 a year executive of the Lehman Corporation now dollar-a-yearing for the OPM on aluminum and magnesium.

"So far, I think the Olin Corporation will have to make up its mind whom they want to design that plant," Bunker told the Truman committee. "We came to an agreement in the middle of June that they wanted the Aluminum Company to design and construct that plant. Since that time, about the first of August, they secured the services of a Norwegian named Sjoeli, and they now feel they would rather have him design it." If the Olin Corporation wants the Norwegian engineer to do the job, why did Bunker say it would have to "make up its mind"? Did he mean "make up its mind" to let Alcoa build the plant? Did the Olin Corporation pick Alcoa originally, or did the OPM suggest that it had better let Alcoa do the construction—or else? That the agreement was not entirely voluntary was indicated by a later passage in Bunker's testimony. "I told them [Olin]," he said, "I had made this arrangement with the Aluminum Company, that if they wished it they could avail themselves of their services on a no-fee basis, for design, construction, and training of their employees. . . . They were delighted." The design and construction of the Olin plant is especially important to Alcoa because it will use alunite in the making of aluminum. Another passage in the testimony indicates that the Olin Corporation was not always as "delighted" as Mr. Bunker imagined with the arrangements made for it by Alcoa.

"You get the picture, Mr. Bunker, as the committee, I believe, saw it . . .," Senator Mead said. "This site [for the Olin plant] near the water was picked out as a very economical site, having in mind shipping facilities and so forth . . . and it was agreed it was an ideal site. . . . Mr. Chadwick [an OPM employee] came out with an Aluminum Company engineer as his adviser, and they didn't get out of the car, they just drove by and vetoed the site, and then Mr. Chadwick agreed it would go over on higher land where it would be expensive to operate, and where probably after the emergency was over it couldn't stand the competition with other competitive companies." Br. Bunker's answer was cold. "I naturally don't know," was all he said, "whether Mr. Chadwick got in or out of a car at any point because I wasn't there."

Alcoa wants to make sure that the government-owned plants it operates will not be able to undercut its own plants by obtaining cheaper power. Alcoa has a plant at Vancouver where power costs $17.50 a year per kilowatt of capacity. If its new Bonneville plant were established at Cascade Locks, it would get power at $14.50 per installed kilowatt. Despite the most strenuous objections from Secretary Ickes, Jesse Jones a few days ago agreed to allow Alcoa to establish its new plant at Troutdale, Oregon, twenty-five miles away, where power will cost it $17.50 per kilowatt. Either Bonneville or the RFC will have to spend an extra $1,500,000 to $2,000,000 for new transmission lines and other facilities to get the power to Troutdale. These lines will use up more precious copper, of which there is a shortage, and their construction will consume more time, of which there is a greater shortage. Bonneville estimates that it could supply power to a plant at Cascade Locks in six to nine months, but that it may take fifteen months to supply power to Troutdale. Power will cost $300,000 a year more at Troutdale than it would at Cascade Locks. Alcoa comes first, defense second.

I believe the story of the contract between Alcoa and Jesse Jones shows that defense is jeopardized and the security of our country endangered so long as the Houston banker holds the purse-strings of plant expansion. The President will some day bitterly regret the power he has given Jones over the defense program. Secretary Ickes's statement to the Truman committee is a dreadful prophecy we dare not ignore. "When the story of this war comes to be written," he said, "it may have to be written that it was lost because of the recalcitrance of the Aluminum Company of America. It is just as serious as that."

[*This is the last of three articles on Alcoa. The first two were published in* The Nation *for September 27 and October 4.*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Imagination and the War

BY ROBERT BENDINER

IF ADOLF HITLER ever wins this war, fancy will have scored a monumental triumph over stuffiness. From the moment the little Viennese psychopath came to power—an event that was in itself a monstrous improbability—each step he has taken has been precisely the step that our sober analysts assured us he could never take. And they always had reasons. When he sent his illicitly rebuilt Reichswehr illicitly into the Rhineland, the commentators showed just how and why this was as far as he could go. *Anschluss* with Austria was out of the question. The British and the French—and Mussolini, too, for that matter—would never dream of letting this barbarian take Vienna, the gateway to Southeastern Europe. And the blustering fellow knew it.

So Hitler took Austria.

That was bad, but the analysts and the umbrella statesmen were soon back at the old stand explaining that the Austrian affair could in no way be considered a portent of adventuring to come. After all, Austrians *were* Germans, and even liberal opinion in the West had always favored *Anschluss*. Hitler had obtained a signal victory at small expense and little risk, he had probably solidified his position at home, and naturally he would be satisfied. What more could he expect? Czecho-Slovakia? That was nonsense. You see, Czecho-Slovakia was the bastion of Eastern Europe, the keystone of the Versailles system. It was one thing for Hitler to take over the *Kaffeeklatsch* Austrians and something else again to take on a country linked to France and the Soviet Union by the closest alliances; a country, moreover, that boasted the finest of the smaller armies of Europe. Why, even in the Austrian affair, which involved no resistance, it was well known that broken-down Nazi tanks lined the roads all the way to Vienna.

So Hitler took Czecho-Slovakia.

That was worse than bad; it was terrifying, and some of the analysts began to sound a different note. But they were still only a handful. Most of their colleagues and all the official dopesters know that Hitler had had a narrow escape. Europe had been brought to the brink of war, and the Führer's panic at the risk he had run would be enough to assure Peace in Our Time. For it was still clear to the analysts that Germany must above all avoid war. The country simply didn't have the resources. Even as matters stood, the German people were in a bad way. The arms economy had taken a dreadful toll of German health and man-power. There wasn't enough fuel to run automobiles, let alone a mechanized army. Grumbling citizens were wearing paper overcoats and living on turnip tops, and there was no money left—what could Hitler do without money? Then, too, disaffection was rampant in the German army, and Hitler's generals would never again let the country in for a war on two fronts. Since Russia was the Nazis' arch-enemy and would of course be involved in any war from the start, Germany was obviously caught in a vise—unless, of course, it made peace in the West and turned on Russia.

So Hitler made peace with Russia and war on the West.

Once again Hitler had had a pretty good idea of what the world thought was impossible, or at least highly unlikely, and a shrewd notion that this very attitude rendered the most dubious undertaking a likely bet. The formula was surprise, and the Germans grimly set about applying it with that delicacy of touch characteristic alike of the Teuton and the bull. While the French steeled themselves for the coming shock by twiddling their thumbs behind the Maginot Line, practically nobody in the world thought of a German attack on Norway. Sweden, perhaps, because Germany needed the vital Swedish ores; and Denmark, very likely. But Norway was practically the coast of England. How would they ever get the troops necessary for invasion past the British fleet?

So Hitler took Norway, and the stupefied British could only mumble something about the Germans having missed the bus.

Thus it went, down to the one *volte-face* that for cynical imagination and rash implausibility could ever match the Nazi-Soviet pact—the Nazi-Soviet war. There had been prophets to spare who foretold the end of the great *mésalliance,* but it was always the Soviets that would some day wake up to the enormity of the union and turn on their pained and surprised partner. The reverse was unthinkable. The Siegfried of the anti-Comintern had embraced the dragon precisely in order to keep it mollified while he busied himself in another direction. Obviously he would not wheel around and poke the beast in the eye while he was still engaged in mortal combat—especially since the dragon had shown a gift for appeasing that made Chamberlain's efforts look miserly in comparison. That such a wild strategy promised certain advantages to the Germans occurred to no one simply because the whole idea was so preposterous. The gamble was terrific, the stakes of the highest. Hitler plunged—and the world gasped.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

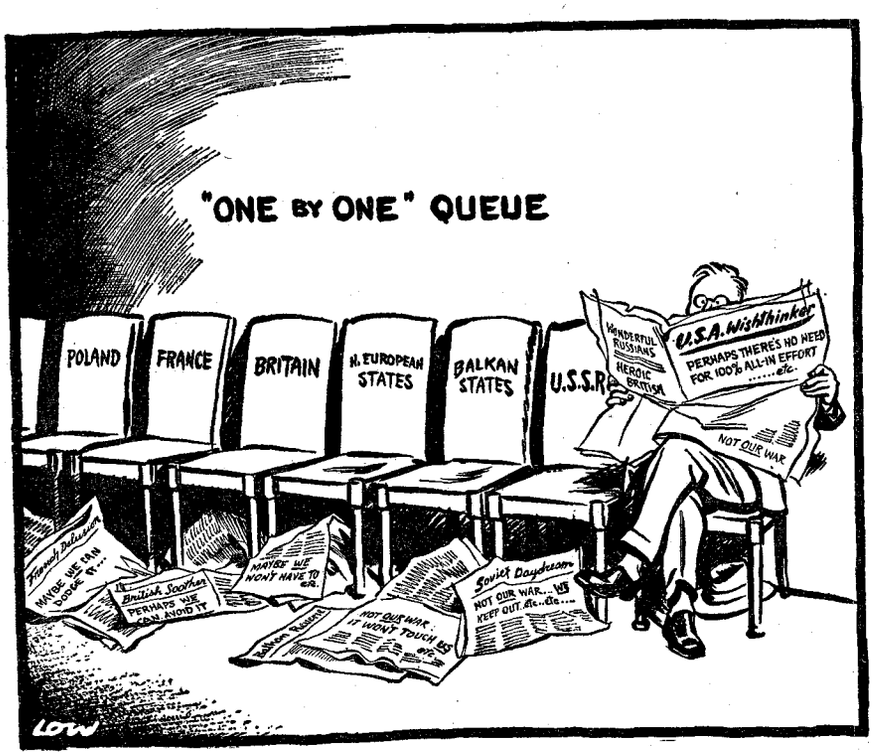
From this willingness to dare all, do all, and damn all has stemmed the belief in Nazi invincibility. People who are not at all fascist in sympathy shake their heads sagely —sometimes even sadly. "We may as well admit it," they say, "the Germans know what they want and they know how to get it. I don't like Hitler any more than you do, but what is there to stop him?"

Yet there is nothing dynamic, much less miraculous, about vowing eternal friendship for a country one day and hurling your legions against it the next, so long as you have the legions to hurl, their craven obedience to count upon, and the moral scruples of a tiger. Gangsters do that sort of thing every week in the year, and nobody has credited Lepke with riding the Wave of the Future. With no responsibility to people, parliament, or conscience, there is nothing in the way of imagination that a dictator need shy away from—save that which he may not be able to get away with. As to this qualification he is the sole judge and a good judge too—until he makes his first mistake. With each new success he can count on even blinder obedience for the next step, greater material strength to start out with, and a still more paralyzing awe on the part of prospective victims.

This is the essence of Nazi dynamism, as it is the essence of gangsterism. Both are capable of acting with a boundless imagination that may well be the envy and despair of those who are fettered by considerations of law or moral responsibility. But it is an envy that the democracies as such cannot indulge to the point of emulation without giving up the ghost. No self-respecting American wants his elected representatives to deal with Hitler on Hitler's terms. The price is far too high.

What, then? Is it to be pistol versus fly-swatter at twenty paces? Hardly as bad as that. In the first place, imagination, however unbridled its use, is not to be confused with invincibility; on the contrary, it is a weapon with drastic limitations, to say nothing of a kick-back that may well knock out its employer before his victim. The beauty of imagination in high places is the response it awakens—the spirit it heightens in one's supporters and the grudging awe it evokes in the enemy. But this same spirit implies, to start with, a response to certain values, certain appeals, and however gross those values may be they cannot be extolled one moment and excoriated the next without doing some injury to morale. It may be imaginative to launch an international coalition against communism; having done so, it may be both imaginative and bewildering to swear abiding friendship for the fountain-head of communism and plunge a nation into war against "decadent capitalism"; having done both these things, it is certainly imaginative to whack up a world crusade against communism as the scourge of civilization—imaginative, yes, but also fatuous. Hitler consulted Barnum on the birth rate of suckers, but he completely missed Lincoln's advice on the limits of public gullibility.

What is worse, from the Nazi standpoint, is that these violent ideological shifts which enable Hitler to do the unpredictable tend to confuse his followers and lower their morale without in the least slaking their thirst, or his own, for bigger and better triumphs of the fancy. For there is no doubt that the drug is habit-forming and that it must be taken in stronger and stronger doses. While the acquisition of Austria, for example, was a thrill for the Nazis in 1938, the gain of the whole Balkan peninsula means next to nothing to the Nazis of 1941. They are jaded and ready for bigger things. This craving makes for rashness, for insane gambles; but there can be no stopping now: *Heute gehört uns Deutschland; morgen die ganze Welt.*



If the Wheelers and Lindberghs have their way, it is all too probable that Hitler will gain *die ganze Welt.* But if he doesn't, then he is done for entirely. That is the fatal weakness of Nazism; it must have all or nothing. It cannot stand still, much less suffer an unmitigated reverse. When it failed to take England on schedule it had to move against Russia; if it is stymied in Russia it will have to achieve a victory—some sort of victory—elsewhere. Perhaps in Rio de Janeiro, which the sober analysts will tell you is not Paris, which they told us was not Prague, which they told us was not Vienna,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which they told us was not Berlin. The British could be smashed in Flanders and in France and live to boast of Dunkirk; they could be routed in Greece and still keep their thumbs up in London. Hitler can afford no such luxury.

If imagination has limitations and dangers for Hitler, it does not follow that its use is denied to the democracies. Indeed, it is a *sine qua non* of their success. They need not—they dare not—bungle along, rationalizing their Dunkirks and waiting for the enemy to leap into a strait-jacket. Action is the only purpose and justification of national unity in a democracy, and, more than that, it is the only means of achieving such unity and avoiding the corrosion of domestic morale. The low state of mind that afflicts our training camps testifies to the fact that men who have been asked to abandon their normal pursuits for the sake of the public good will not cheerfully wait around month after month for something to turn up. If Nazism is menacing enough to American democracy to take a million men from their homes and their work, it is menacing enough to warrant frustrating it in every possible way, menacing enough to call for the most daring leadership, no matter what our status may be in terms of diplomacy.

Since the fall of France the democratic world has learned a good deal about the potent effects of imagination in high places. General Wavell's African campaign was worth everything it cost because it had the dash and initiative that were so sorely needed to brace the sagging spirits of the world. Even though the military implications of that campaign were never profound and its gains were soon to be wiped out, it was a marvelous tonic to read of the bold Fascisti tumbling over one another in hot haste to surrender, or scurrying across the desert sands to elude the "worn-out pluto-democrats" from Australia. After months of the too-little-and-too-late strategy, it was exhilarating to watch the British seize the initiative in Iraq, in Syria, in Iran.

In this same tradition of timely, imaginative action was Winston Churchill's speech on the occasion of Germany's assault on Russia. That speech, delivered without hesitation or equivocation, set the policy for a war-to-the-death against Nazism. If Churchill had waited a few days, if he had hedged, all might have been lost. A movement for making peace with the "crusaders against Bolshevism" might have gained the momentum needed to split British and American opinion beyond repair.

Closer to home, the American occupation of Iceland was one of those daring maneuvers that have come with too little frequency from the democracies, and its effects were highly instructive. If the President had blandly asked Congress to think about the advisability of our sending troops to Iceland, what might have been the results? Presumably Congress would in time have indorsed the projected move, just as it has supported every other major step in the President's foreign policy, Mr. Lindbergh notwithstanding. But before 531 legislators had done their work on the measure, before their various committees had taken testimony from every schemer in the land, the Germans would certainly have taken measures to circumvent the move. In the meantime, the country would have been kept in a state of seething unrest, with the Firsters and their allies thumping the tub in every city and town, warning the people against the attempts of the warmongers to sneak this country into the conflict through the back door of Iceland, and so forth *ad nauseam*. What a lovely picture for fascist-minded Americans, what a delight to the eye of Dr. Goebbels! Then indeed would our marginal democrats, who are so impressed with the dynamics of fascism, have shaken their heads sadly over the bungling of democracy.

Instead of this dismal picture, we have American troops safely ensconced in Iceland, where, with the permission and cooperation of the Icelandic government, they fulfil the avowed will of this country to aid Britain and keep the Nazis from dominating the Atlantic; while on the home front the clearly executed maneuver, far from having torn the country, gave it a sorely needed fillip and won, in turn, a practically unanimous approval. Senator Wheeler did his best to make an issue of the move by blasting it in advance, even though it meant tipping off the Germans, but when he failed—he had his dates confused—he quickly decided that the move was unobjectionable from "a purely defensive standpoint."

Here, then, were two possible courses open to the Administration. Can there be any doubt which was the more honestly calculated to serve the purposes of democracy and demonstrate a healthy capacity for self-preservation?

The realm of imaginative action in this war has, on our part, scarcely been touched. In one way or another the Nazis must be checkmated at Dakar. Their every move must be anticipated in Brazil and throughout Latin America. The sea lanes to Britain must be kept open at any cost. And every conceivable device must be brought into play to strengthen the enemies of Hitler, East and West. Let these things be done with vigor, imagination, and a clean swiftness, and the deadly lethargy that chloroformed France and is just as surely settling down over this country will lift and allow us to breathe again.

Let the Administration give daring leadership: let it gamble, if you will, in a positive sense rather than take hazardous chances on the possibilities of lying low, and it will find behind it a country ready to act, a country less inclined to give an ear to every humbug who decries the "loss" of representative government while, knowingly or not, he does his damnedest to eliminate it forever.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Undiscoverables

BY RALPH BATES

II. The Dark Multitude

SUMMARY OF PART I. *Italy's entry into the war breaks upon the Sicilian fishing village of San Filippo as a dark rumor. The fishermen are warned indirectly by Don Cataldo Margarone, the futile, anxious old harbor master, not to take the fleet out. But they go nevertheless, and earlier than usual. Their departure is an act of faith, an assurance to themselves that war will not come. The rumor becomes fact as the Fascist officer, Lieutenant Varchi, arrives in a coast-guard cutter. He loses no time in ousting Don Cataldo as harbor master. But the sardine fleet is already well on its way to the fishing grounds.*

THE San Filippo fishermen made no pretense of going to the Black Teeth, but set their course at full speed of their motors for the fishing ground of previous nights. The spray flew high from their prows, for a northwest wind was ribbing the bay with darker blue and breaking the heads of the dying swell that undulated out of the south. Despite the strong breeze no one decided to hoist sail and economize fuel until they were a good three-quarters of a mile from the harbor mouth. Then the fishermen caught sight of a naval cutter hitting up spray close in shore, moving like a gull across the bases of the low cliffs. Everyone watched the cutter in silence and with increasing anxiety until at reckless speed it swerved sharply and darted into San Filippo harbor. The fishing fleet cut their motors and, opening the lateens, set course to make a long leg to the southeast. There was no point in haste, for if they were to be forbidden to fish they would soon be overtaken by such a fast-moving craft as the cutter. The few boats whose masts had been cut down to stumps and which traveled on motor power alone stood on the direct course and so drew away. The fishing fleet became silent, except for the glut and slap of water against the high prows. And this silence matched the watchfulness of the fishermen. The Archangel Michael was still riding in the bay. Presently her sail opened, and she moved out slowly. There had been no signal to remain in harbor, then.

The fishermen murmured among themselves. They were less resolute now. They still wished to profit by one more night's unhindered labor, but they also desired to be on land, where they might hear whatever news had been brought by the visitor. They gazed back uneasily at the town, whose red and brown tiled roofs had for centuries clustered around the vast church in similar crises. The westering sun shone fully upon the enormous stone-garlanded, martyr-sentineled façade of Our Lady of Succor. At that hour the shadow of the church would have crept over Capraro's tavern yard, where the fishermen always gathered. It would be cool in the yard, sitting beneath the scanty foliage of Capraro's vine, with the gusts striking softly down from the great flank of the church. There they might have discussed the news, or, if the informer in Lisazzio's boat were present, at least they might have thought about it. And at six o'clock they could have listened to Capraro's radio. And had the rumor not been confirmed they could have called for jugs of Capraro's best Marsala in special celebration. They could have listened to the radio music or to Ferrarello the mandolinist, who for all his evil reputation and his fantastic, sneering tongue was an excellent musician. Today the Archangel Michael would have music if the men wanted it. Ferrarello made one of her scratch crew.

The wind died away and the whitecaps disappeared before the fleet arrived at the fishing ground, through the waters of which the old fishwise men, or the loquacious, opinionated men, said the migrant sardines were still moving. Though it was early, the men gathered round the fish wells for the evening meal as soon as they dropped anchor. As the wine and water traveled to and fro, the men conversed quietly, about the greater world, without animation. On other evenings not a political word would have passed. They would have discussed the price of fish, the possibility of their luck holding out, the patching of a roof, the sale of a house, a projected marriage, a quarrel, or a suspicious maneuver of Stefani, the fish-curer and general commission agent of the town. This evening, when the lamps had been lit and the light-boats rowed into their places, another event superseded the war itself as the theme of the fishermen's conversation. Two boats that for many years had not lain near each other, that before night fell had not even ridden side by side, were now within an oar's length of each other. The fishermen knew it because the two acetylene lamps of Santangelo's light-boat and the gasoline flare of Coppola's were moving apart. They were so close when the fishermen noticed them that they knew that Santangelo's Our Lady of the Rosary and Francesco Coppola's Purification lay in the darkness between. Once or twice, when the light-boats rose together on the swell, they even perceived the two fishing boats, faintly illuminated, between the moving hills of brilliant, light-pene-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

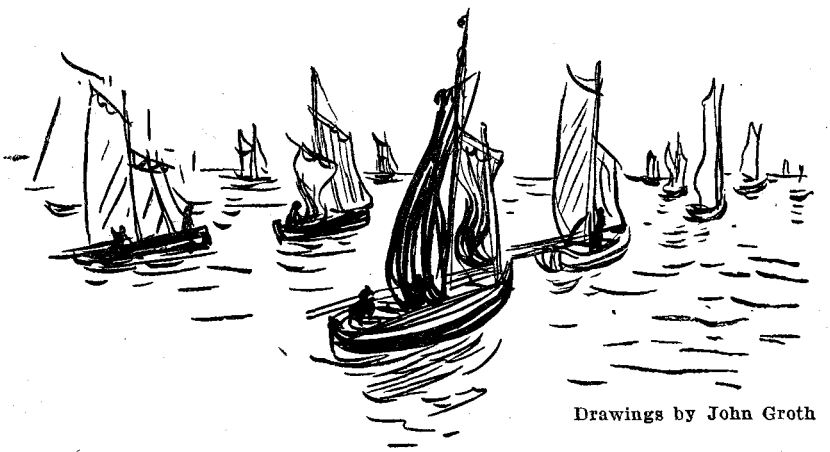
trated water. Even at the extremities of the fleet, where it was not easy to distinguish light from light in the center's constellation, there was comment. In their minds men drew a line through the blackness from one light-boat to the other and nodded their heads. Neither on land nor sea did Santangelo and Coppola associate. Lisazzio, Santangelo's companion on land, though their boats were nowadays never moored side by side in harbor, himself tried to attract the attention of Andaloro, his brother-in-law and light-man, without waking the few risen fish from the soft effulgence of their dream around the lights. He whistled several times with increasing loudness and lit matches and cupped them in his hands and waved them. Andaloro had lain down in the bottom of the light-boat with a blanket over his head to shut out the glare. Then the motorman slapped Lisazzio's buttock, and he sat down. He had not noticed that a dense silver-gray cloud of fish was moving into the transparent gem of water around the light-boat.

Lisazzio sat side by side with his partner. With heads bowed and temples almost touching, they murmured about Santangelo's lying near Coppola. Francisco Coppola and Giovanni Santangelo, in the years just after the World War, though fishermen, had been political colleagues. After all opposition to the present regime had been crushed, they had deemed it wiser not to associate publicly.

In Lisazzio's boat it was not safe to discuss such a matter openly, for though the Fascio had not a single member among the fishermen, there were one or two *sbirri*. One of them, although he was a lazy and inefficient informer—for years there had been nothing to report—worked in Lisazzio's boat. When Lisazzio had discovered this he had at once abandoned his traditional mooring place in San Filippo harbor in the very center of the fleet on the western side and had taken a ring right underneath the harbor master's office. The *sbirro* had made no protest, but he had understood. It was pride that had made Lisazzio do this. He would not be cold-shouldered, and preferred to take this informer out of the circle of his friends. The informer, Lisazzio knew, would not understand what the nearness of the two boats meant; he had lived in the town only nine years.

The nearness of the boats was noticed throughout the fleet, particularly in the Archangel Michael. "It's the war they want to talk about," the senior partner, Nicolino Pirtuso, said. "Well, it makes a man think. What have we got to fight about?" Nobody paid much attention to him. Pirtuso was unpopular, not so much because of his quarrelsome temper as because with his loudness of voice went a great capacity for sliding out of trouble. And Nicolino invariably picked his man, and the occasion. Paterno, for instance, was a meager-hearted fellow eternally bemoaning his fate. Nicolino bullied him without rest. And whenever Santangelo protested against some meddlesome ordinance of the authorities, and he had done this several times, Pirtuso always backed out, after loud-mouthed agreement. It was safe enough to criticize Rome and Italy's entry into the war out here in the Archangel Michael. It took a man like Maniscalco to speak out on land. The goatherd's outburst had been sheer lunacy, but no man could despise him.

"Look, the sardines are rising," Luca said without enthusiasm. Paterno would be dismal of soul if his nets brought up the golden crowns of a thousand kings.



Drawings by John Groth

"The sardines are rising," Ferrarello, the blasphemous, sneering mandolinist of San Filippo, sang nasally, to a scrap of melody from Aïda. "He! little fishes, swim up to the thirty-four moons in the sky . . ." He leaned over the gunwale and peered into the sea. "Thousands, with their suitcases and their parcels, all packed up, going off to . . . Where are they going, Nicolino?"

"Who?" Nicolino said, staring at the strange fellow.

"The fish."

"They aren't rising yet."

"I see them. Millions of them. Mother of God in second pregnancy!"

"Just one or two. Not sardines. Wandering fish, swimming alone," Nicolino said, coming to Ferrarello's side and gazing into the dimly lit water. The light-boat was being towed at the end of fifty yards of line. Just then a soft whistle came from another boat. The fish were clustering around the motionless lights. At that moment there was a simultaneous exclamation from all the crew.

"Eh, traveling people, fish people," Ferrarello was saying, "all hurrying away to the west. Eh, millions and millions. Bundles on your backs, suitcases and parcels in your hands. Pushing handcarts. Some jackass has said there are lights somewhere in the darkness. Little dolts!"

"Ah!" Nicolino shouted behind him. An excited muttering broke out.

"What's the matter, Nicolino?" Filippo sat up. Nicolino's hand was pointed at the town.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well?" the mandolinist said, turning round. "Eh!" he exclaimed and stood up. The lights of San Filippo had gone out.

Luca began to whine unintelligibly. After several moments' thought Nicolino said:

"We'd better move out to the far end. We'll get more time when Don Cataldo comes out to call us back."

"Don Cataldo rides the waves to call the fishers back. Oh, pray for Don Cataldo," began Filippo in the heroic tones of a marionette theater recently in the town.

"Mouth shut," Nicolino snapped and proceeded to revile the mandolinist lengthily. The crew were silent.

Pirtuso was picking his man again. The motor could not be used because the fish were already clustering densely around the neighboring lights. They rowed for a while; then the lateen was quietly opened and the Archangel Michael made its silent way along the outskirts of the fleet to the very extremity. No one spoke except Filippo, who sneered at the crew manifestly oppressed by thought of the war. The war had already changed every man's temper. At the end of an hour, when the fish were dense around the Archangel's light-boat, the crew again burst into imprecations. The lights at the far end of the fleet had gone out. The drone of a motor was heard.

"Put out the light," Luca said and whistled loudly.

"Be quiet," was Nicolino's answer. "Who cares for that old fool. He'll be arguing for hours yet with the other boats." Nevertheless, the lights of the fleet continued to go out, and Nicolino gave the order to unship oars. While they were drawing the net around the fish, the motor boat dashed down upon them.

"Damnation take you," Nicolino Pirtuso roared, holding the oar out of the water. The motor boat would scare the fish. A moment later they all rose to their feet and yelled blasphemously, even the ne'er-do-well landsman Ferrarello. The visitor, instead of veering off, was approaching the net itself.

"Mother of God, lay off," Luca whined, wringing his hands. The cutter, much swifter than Don Cataldo's little craft, swept through the net. A moment later its engine was cut off and the boat itself quickly lost speed. "Mother of God, you damned fool, you yellow-faced, impotent old fool," Nicolino shouted and seized an oar furiously. The others did the same. When they ran the Archangel's prow against the cutter, Nicolino sprang forward and cursed the harbor master. "You've cut my net to shreds. God damn your leprous soul, Margarone," he yelled. Though the crew were also enraged, they were not impressed by Nicolino's defiance. It was not dangerous to be offensive to Don Cataldo, with such an excuse. It was like Nicolino to show valor at this moment.

"Your damned net has fouled our screw," another voice replied from the motor boat.

"Arrest that man!" The viciously spoken order rang out from the cutter's bows.

"Go on, try it, you gutless old idiot." Then Nicolino realized that he was not addressing Don Cataldo but a man dressed as a naval lieutenant. "Who—who are you?" he shouted.

"Ha! You've opened your eyes, have you!" the lieutenant said.

"Blazing hell, I've opened my eyes! Eh, hear him! I've opened *my* eyes. God damn you, couldn't you see you were cutting my net?" Nicolino leaped on to the cutter, astonishing the Archangel's crew. They had expected him to apologize at once and slide out of trouble with his customary skill. And though the ripping of the net could be held to justify his anger, his reckless conduct confounded all their suppositions concerning him. They lurched forward as if about to board the cutter.

Usually nimble, Nicolino now blundered forward, as clumsy as a mad bull with its feet in a hurdle, thrashing his arms, spittle flying. "Rot your bowels," he yelled and pitched headlong among the lieutenant's men. They pinned him down at once. Lying on his side, his neck bent against a seat and so barely able to speak, he croaked, "If I had my own crew, son of a priest." Lieutenant Varchi did not hear the insult, and his crew, not understanding the fisherman's reference to his own men and alarmed at the thought of standing three against seven, did not report it. They allowed Nicolino to stand up. Gasping, pressing his bleeding cheekbone with his fingertips, he spat out words and bile together.

"Where do you think you're running your damned sniveling nose; where do you think I shall find another net?" His temper suddenly became even more violent. He choked with rage. Behind him his scratch crew, without solidarity, stood crowded into the Archangel's bows. At last he demanded, "Well, what have you got to say?"

"You would be wise to control your tongue," Lieutenant Varchi said. The fishermen were again astonished at hearing authority abdicate in this fashion.

"You scare away my fish and God's redemption, too. You rip my net into shreds. Womb of the Virgin, you tell *me* to be silent. We shall see, God's blood and blazing hell, we shall see." Pirtuso turned about, and scat-

[*Continued on page* 382]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Defense Changes America

BY ALDEN STEVENS

I. The New Technical Revolution

AS THE defense program grows, it slowly takes up the slack in employment. Already more persons are employed in the United States than ever before. With the total swelling steadily, it is perhaps unimportant that a new phenomenon, priorities unemployment, is developing at the same time, though at a definitely slower pace; Evansville, Indiana, and a hundred other towns built around washing machines or refrigerators or silk mills are having no boom but a depression. Leon Henderson has warned that two and a half million people may become victims of priorities unemployment—and two-thirds of the 3,073 counties in the United States have no defense contracts—but so long as the general employment curve is upward, there is a chance that these innocent bystanders will be reabsorbed.

When world peace is restored, however, if that time ever comes, a very large number of persons now in the armed forces and in defense industries are going to have to find new jobs. What kind of work will be available? Will there be agricultural work, factory jobs, construction? Under the influence of defense, observable changes are taking place in American industry and agriculture. What will be their effect on post-war employment? "Back to the land" is a simple slogan with an appealing sound. Let us explore its possibilities first.

Some 30,000,000 people live on 6,000,000 farms, and the mechanization of agriculture is a process familiar to all of us. The harvester-thresher combine, of which nearly 150,000 are now in use, handles more than half of our wheat crop. Rubber-tired tractors—faster, cheaper, easier to operate, and more generally useful—are coming rapidly into use; 75 per cent of all farm tractors built this year will be rubber-tired. With a good tractor and proper equipment to use with it an able-bodied man can run a fair-sized farm in most parts of the country practically single-handed. The mechanical corn-picker is economical now for harvesting 100 acres or more. A smaller, improved model is on the way. The mechanical cane-chopper is enormously promising and may displace many thousands of workers on the sugar plantations of the South. The cotton-picker has a long way to go before it can substitute for the cotton hand, but it cannot be asserted that its defects will never be overcome.

The effects of technological advance have long been felt on the farm, but they are being greatly accelerated by the defense program. Last year the country was faced with the need to train and equip an army. It had to build camps and cantonments, nearly 200 of them; it had to build factories and dams and housing. Wages are high on construction jobs in boom times. A carpenter can make from $75 to $100 a week, and almost any farmer can make shift as a carpenter. He has had to know how to use tools and to work with wood and concrete in order to keep his machinery and buildings in order. He can make as much money in six weeks on a defense project as he has often made in a year. Money like that looks good to young men who have stayed on the farm only because they couldn't find anything else to do, and those that aren't drafted into the army are likely to be off after a construction job. A Congressional committee found 5,000,000 migrants on defense jobs, of whom nearly 1,000,000 came from farms.

When young Jones goes into the army or gets a job building a new powder plant, his father is left to run the farm. If the work wasn't mechanized before, it has to be now, because more machinery is the only thing that will make it possible for Jones, Sr., to do the work alone. Tractors, six-foot combines, pick-up hay-balers have never had bigger sales than they are having this year. If the cotton-picker and the corn-picker and the forage-harvester were perfected instruments they would be filling the country, too. Perhaps the farmer's boy building an army camp is sending home money to help buy some of this machinery. When he does this he may be cutting himself off from the farm forever, for he is buying the machinery that will displace him.

With human labor leaving the farm, the only alternative to mechanization is to cut acreage, and with $1.20 wheat and 80-cent corn and 17-cent cotton there is no desire to do that. Besides, the whole world will need food from America during the next few years.

No other industry in America is developing so rapidly as the aircraft industry. Before the war planes had always been made pretty much by hand; there had never been a large enough demand for ships of a single design to justify the expense and long effort of creating a production line. The sudden urgent demand for an unlimited number of planes has started a process of expansion which will increase factory floor space threefold, the number of workers fivefold, and multiply fabulously the monthly production figures. Martin, Vultee, Douglas, Curtiss-Wright, all have well-oiled and prolific assembly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lines even now, and other companies are not far behind. As to the post-war outlook, the industry is certainly not going to stop growing, but when the need for military planes is cut off, production is going to drop, for a time at least. Later it may climb slowly again, but by that time mass-production of planes will be virtually universal, and fewer men than ever will be needed to produce them. Aircraft factories are likely to have too many ex-employees to be able to offer jobs to ex-soldiers.

In housing, mass production is also on the way. We have ordered 120,000 housing units for defense workers, and we are ordering more each month. "Not only has the prefabricated house received a much-needed shot in the arm from United States war preparations," says the *Architectural Forum,* "but its perennial twin, the demountable house, at long last seems to be making a serious bid for attention." At Indian Head, Maryland, 650 prefabricated houses are being built for the navy at an average cost of $2,357 each. At least twenty-six firms are making prefabricated houses in substantial quantities. Many others are experimenting. With defense contracts in their pockets, the makers have the resources to iron out their production problems and are going right ahead. Plants now running are turning out wall panels with windows, pipes, and wiring already in place on a continuous moving belt, as many as twenty-three a day! The capacity of the industry, conservatively estimated, is already 25,000 houses a year and is growing fast, despite the opposition of the A. F. of L. craft unions. Ten-men crews are putting up houses in six to eight hours that would have taken six to eight weeks only two years ago, and the total number of man-hours, in factory and field, required to build a dwelling unit is dropping every month. These prefabricated houses are not rickety shacks which leak at the corners and creak in a windstorm; they are well-planned, substantial, practical houses.

Dean Walter R. MacCornack of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology suggested recently to the American Institute of Architects that one of the best ways to keep up employment after the war would be to recondition American cities. The cities certainly need it, and the Dean's suggestion is bold and sensible. But the most urgent need, even in cities, is for dwellings, and the larger the city, the more expensive it is to construct a family dwelling unit. The Red Hook project (USHA) in Brooklyn cost $4,805 per apartment, $1,148 per room, including land purchase. Prefabricated houses built on cheaper land are appearing like mushrooms for prices from $2,000 to $2,500—about $500 per room. If we are serious about rehousing, it will be good sense to get away from the cities as much as we can and build more family units for the money available.

The gigantic defense housing program, the biggest building boom in American history, is providing only about 2 per cent of the number of dwelling units we would need to rehouse our ill-housed "third of a nation." This makes it clear that there is only one possible way to rehouse America, and that is with cheap factory-made houses. But with the number of man-hours of work required per house being steadily reduced as mass-production gets under way, there are going to be fewer jobs in building after the war than now—unless this boom in housing not merely continues but increases fast enough to take up the slack caused by improved prefabrication methods. Furthermore, after the emergency we must be prepared for a slump in plant and factory construction, now proceeding at a dizzy pace.

In the manufacture of steel, mechanization and mass production have been carried perhaps as far as they can be, and for that reason the industry is worth looking at here. In western Pennsylvania and elsewhere, as recently as about five years ago, sheet and plate steel were made in the old hand mills—hot, crowded, roaring places, where men dextrously handled red-hot steel with tongs. Now only a few of these old hand mills are running, for the automatic strip mill can produce the same amount of steel at 20 per cent less total cost. (The *labor* cost on a 100-pound box of tinplate is said by the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee to be $1.52 in a hand mill, $.64 in a strip mill.) In the strip mill a three-ton rectangular ingot drops out of a furnace directly on to a long line of close-set, electrically driven rollers, which shoot it through heavy wringer-like presses until at the end of the line a minute later the ends are neatly clipped off and the long, thin, dull-red sheet is rolled up automatically and deposited on a moving belt. Men have not touched it during its transformation except perhaps to pull a loose end or an accidental scrap off the table. The few workers in the mill stand by the electric control switches. The place is nearly empty of human beings; it echoes with the clang of steel racing from furnace to freight car practically without attention.

Some steel-company officers say, in effect, "There is no such thing as technological unemployment. Technology makes more jobs, not fewer, because it makes possible new industries which employ more men to make new products." Thousands of ex-steel workers living on relief in Sharon, Newcastle, and McKeesport have other notions about the effect of the automatic strip mill on employment. And more strip mills are being built to replace the few remaining hand mills. If the demand for steel is less after the war, or even if it holds steady, the industry will be dropping men, not taking them on.

It is true that the long-range effects of technological advance are far from simple, and that new industries do sometimes develop to take up the slack in employment caused by labor-saving machinery elsewhere. It may be true, as many economists contend, that although technology temporarily reduces employment it will eventually increase it—more men are engaged in making and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

servicing automobiles than ever made and serviced horse-drawn vehicles. Complicated factors enter here, some of which will be discussed in the next article of this series. But while hoping that these promised long-range benefits may be obtained, we cannot ignore the threat already here. The terrific demand for farm equipment is enabling manufacturers of new kinds of farm machinery to produce on a mass basis. Textile machinery is being revamped and brought up to date by the big army orders—methods were backward before the crisis. Food-packing machinery is being improved. In almost all industries the same pressure—to produce more goods with fewer workmen—coupled with the same golden opportunity—defense orders providing money for experiment and development—is resulting in the adoption of new labor-saving devices as fast as they can be designed and obtained. The same emergency that is bringing so many men back into our factories is making those factories more automatic and more efficient than ever before. This situation threatens to cause unemployment after the emergency is over that will be even greater than what we experienced in the depression.

[*The second article of this series will appear next week.*]

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Facing Inflation—III

IT APPEARS certain, as I showed in the second article in this series, that the Treasury's current deficit is not going to be covered by voluntary savings. Consequently the gap between purchasing power and the supply of consumable goods, which I have argued is the real source of the present inflationary pressure on prices, is likely to be enlarged by borrowing from the banks—a form of credit creation tending to expand the total of spendable incomes. Moreover, we must remember that defense spending is still far from its peak, and we must expect a further big expansion in the budget for 1942-43.

The obvious, if disagreeable, remedy is more taxation, and from the purely economic point of view the best possible way of financing the defense program would be on a pay-as-you-go basis. As Charles E. Noyes pointed out in *The Nation* of August 2, 1941, no amount of government borrowing will increase the stock of goods available to consumers; all it can do is to offer an inducement in the form of a claim on future national income to those comfortably enough situated to be able to refrain from the full exercise of their purchasing power. It would make for a healthier economic outlook after the war if that surplus purchasing power were directly removed by taxation.

Assuming that taxation must and will be further increased, we then have to consider how to devise levies which will help and not hinder the defense program and how to assess the burden as equitably as possible. The idea is being sedulously fostered that wage-earners pay little or no taxation, that almost the whole current revenue is dragged from the pockets of the middle- and upper-bracket income classes. Thanks to the predilection of Congress for hidden taxes—which are less apt to arouse political repercussions—this is far from the truth. According to a study prepared by Dr. Gerhard Colm for the TNEC, in the year 1938-39 incomes below $2,000 a year paid 44.4 per cent of all direct and indirect taxes (excluding corporation taxes). The middle-class group with incomes of $2,000 to $10,000 paid 31 per cent of the total, while the rich, who are inclined to talk as if the whole burden were on their shoulders, contributed only 24.4 per cent. The same authority points out that 17.6 to 22 per cent of incomes below $2,000 was absorbed by taxes in that year, but only 15 to 17 per cent of middle-class incomes.

In spite of these facts, a diligent propaganda is being conducted in business circles for the adoption of a general sales tax—an impost characterized by the same majestic impartiality as the law, once quoted by Anatole France, which prohibits rich and poor alike from sleeping beneath railroad arches. Such a tax could only be a really worth-while revenue producer if placed on all retail purchases, including basic necessities of food and clothing. In this case, as retail sales are now estimated to be running at around $50 billion annually, a 1 per cent general sales levy would yield in the neighborhood of $500 million annually. Secretary Morgenthau's recently proposed new and drastic excess-profits tax would, it is believed, bring in roughly $4 billion annually. A general sales tax to be equally productive—and its advocates clearly regard it as an alternative to increased levies on corporations—would therefore have to be at the rate of 8 per cent. This would mean a sharp cut in the standard of living of wage- and salary-earners while placing on the rich a burden which could easily be shrugged off with a few unfelt economies. Indirect taxation is always offensive to the principle of assessment in accordance with capacity to pay, but in time of emergency imposts on non-essentials, particularly those which compete for labor or materials with defense items, can be justified. A general sales tax, however, violates every canon of fiscal equity.

Let us turn now to Mr. Morgenthau's proposals for clipping excess profits. The Secretary of the Treasury wishes to do away with the present option which allows corporations to decide whether they will be assessed on the basis of 95 per cent of their average earnings in the years 1936 to 1939 or on the basis of 8 per cent of their capital value. He would like to limit all corporations to a 6 per cent return on their invested capital, with the Treasury taking all earnings above that figure. Critics of this plan—and they are many and vociferous—have declared that it would discriminate unfairly between those concerns which have acted providently in writing off obsolescent plant and intangibles such as expenditure on research and those which have allowed their balance sheets to become saturated with water.

This contention is not without merit, and for my part I believe that the objective of eliminating the maximum of profits arising from the emergency would be better achieved by using the pre-war average basis and taking 100 per cent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of everything in excess of that. Obviously there are a number of concerns—and some of the heavily capitalized steel and railroad corporations are examples—which were earning little or nothing before defense orders began to pour in. Such corporations are able to retain a very handsome proportion of the defense profits they are now reaping, thanks to the 8 per cent of invested capital option, and even if the ceiling were reduced to 6 per cent they would still be comparatively well off. If limited to a 3 or 4 per cent return, their only ground for complaint would be that they were being prevented from using the emergency to compensate them for the losses they suffered in the thirties.

Important as it is to skim off all excess profits possible, we should not fall into the vulgar error of supposing that the fiscal problem of defense can be solved by soaking the rich and the corporations. If revenue and expenditure are to be more nearly balanced and the inflationary gap closed, further sacrifices must be asked of lower-bracket incomes. There are, of course, millions of workers to whom the defense program has brought little, if any, improvement in income; who remain at or below subsistence levels. Their standards cannot be driven still lower. But the middle-class group of incomes—the $2,000 to $10,000 range—which now includes many of the better-paid wage-earners, as well as the upper brackets, can legitimately be asked to bear burdens more nearly comparable than at present to those imposed on corresponding groups in Britain. Direct taxation of these groups is the most effective means of reducing purchasing power, for the families enjoying $2,000 a year or more comprise only about a quarter of all families but account for around half the total consumption.

It is true that an upward revision of the increased rates on the lower brackets imposed by the latest revenue bill will bear fairly heavily on the standard of living to which this group is accustomed. But if we are to emerge safely from this crisis of our civilization we must forgo not only business as usual but comfort as usual. Let every harassed taxpayer keep in mind Somerset Maugham's epitaph on France: "If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that too."

In the Wind

TWO WEEKS AFTER the American Legion convention in Milwaukee, Governor Julius Heil addressed the Junior Chamber of Commerce in that city and charged that the Legion had been railroaded into supporting the government's foreign policy against its will. Concluding some general remarks on the war, the governor of the dairy state said: "I'm glad there's a little scrap on over there. They can't send over those little cheeses any more, and now we're making it and selling it."

EDWARD L. BERNAYS, the public-relations expert, has taken on the personal account of Torkild Rieber, former president of the Texas Oil Company. Rieber was exposed by the New York *Herald Tribune* last summer as an intimate of the Nazi agents Curt Rieth and Dr. Gerhart Westrick. He resigned as president of Texaco but has since become a director of the firm.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY has been playing down the Bridges deportation case in its publications, indicating either that Bridges is out of favor or that the party's full support would hurt the defense. At a Communist meeting held in Los Angeles recently to protest against political persecution, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn reviewed the history of the subject from the Haymarket case down and ended with a defense of Earl Browder, Sam Darcy, and William Schneiderman. Neither she nor any of the other speakers mentioned Harry Bridges.

WHEN THE COMMUNISTS were barred from holding office in the American Civil Liberties Union, they charged it to "war hysteria" and set up the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties. A pacifist minister, the Reverend Owen A. Knox, was made chairman. Since the turn in the line, the Reverend Mr. Knox has resigned. A statement from the federation says: "To Reverend Knox the greatest danger . . . to the Bill of Rights . . . is war; to the federation it is Hitlerism."

A CAMPAIGN to boycott the New York *Daily News,* which has frequently been charged with anti-Semitism during the past year, has been started by an anonymous group which is distributing handbills and mailing pieces throughout the city.

AN OLD MAN went up to a newsstand in Rome and asked for the *Regime Fascista,* the leading party paper. The proprietor told him that there were no more copies. Half an hour later the same man appeared again, asked the same question, and got the same answer. This was repeated several times, until the dealer got angry and said that there were positively no more copies. "Even if it isn't true," said the old man, "it sounds good."

LAURA INGALLS, the aviatrix, has become Lindbergh's female counterpart as a flying isolationist. She is speaking for Women United, the ladies' auxiliary of America First.

T. JAMES TUMULTY, the young Irish lawyer who is putting up a brilliant fight against Mayor Hague in Jersey City, recently opened an office with a Jewish colleague. They have decided to call their firm "Tumulty and Sepunik—the Dublin-Jerusalem Axis."

THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE investigating propaganda in motion pictures may disband in a week or so. It is reported that only its chairman, Senator D. Worth Clark, is interested in continuing it; the others feel that all the good publicity thus far has gone to the opposition.

[*The $5 prize for the best item received in September goes to J. L. of New York City for his story on Mayor LaGuardia and the gasoline shortage published on September 20.*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Book-Burners and Their Motives

IN HIS office on Park Street, which runs by the Boston Common to the State House, Ferris Greenslet, editor of Houghton Mifflin and Company, is half surprised and half sore about the action of Governor Gene Talmadge's Georgia Board of Education in banning, along with a dozen or so other books, Houghton Mifflin's "A Man Named Grant" by Helen Todd. He does not like the idea of taking this business "in an entirely horizontal position, that is, lying down."

Standing up or lying down, I told him, I doubted that anybody was much interested. It seems so generally agreed, I said, that Gene Talmadge by all sensible standards is a noisy idiot that nobody is very much surprised or—outside of Park Street in Boston—very much disturbed.

Now, I've changed my mind. Ralph McGill, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution,* which Talmadge would also like to bar if he could from voters as well as school children, changed it for me, without meaning to. McGill is as much opposed to such stupid censorship as Greenslet is. But in a piece describing to Georgians the fatuous stupidity of the business he said, "I know the people who banned the books most prayerfully and honestly believed they were doing the right thing."

I don't believe that for one minute. And if I did believe it for one instant, in that instant I should have to give the same credit to Hitler. I understand that in Georgia a man has to write gingerly in standing up for books that have been banned because they are supposed to reflect on the South, the Bible, the state of Georgia, or back-country Georgia notions about all three. I know that McGill was taking what seemed to him to be the best way to effectiveness in Georgia by throwing such refrigerated meat to the voracious political and puritanical tomcats of his Talmadge-plagued land. But it seems to me that it is time to stop talking about the honest motives, not to speak of the prayerful piety, of people out to destroy freedom of books, whether those people be the protectors of Georgia school children from economic and racial radicalism, the Watch and Ward Society of Mr. Greenslet's Massachusetts, the textbook-investigating committee of the National Association of Manufacturers, or any other set of censors, official or self-appointed, in this land.

People who believe they are doing right when they undertake to "protect" people from printed pages deserve at least as much attention in the United States as the book bonfires in Nazi Germany got here. And Gene Talmadge's purge of the books in Georgia is only more ludicrous than other such efforts, which are not restricted to Georgia in the United States. It has not been long since it was against the law to sell in Massachusetts books which were being freely sold and read everywhere else in the United States. In my own state recently the politicians on the State Board of Education turned down a state-history text, recommended by educators, because it said that some politicians had been chosen in elections not notable for purity. In its place they adopted a book which turned out later to have a factual mistake on almost every page. It was easy to understand the politicians in that case. But in Georgia they have banned books which seem irrelevant to the censors' own restrictions—books which seem to have been picked almost at random, in a sort of fanatical carelessness, from a library shelf. Some people say, indeed, that the Talmadge censors are not so much interested in banning certain books as in making an appeal to the illiterate with a gesture against intelligence.

One of the books ejected from the schools is the "Southern Regions" of Howard Odum, who was born in Bethlehem, Georgia. It is the first source book of information about the South, but Georgia children would have to be paid more than the prevailing Georgia wage to be induced to read its voluminous scholarship. The only possible reason I can see for kicking out Mr. Greenslet's book is the censor's regret of the historical fact that there ever was a man named Grant.

Nobody imagines that Governor Talmadge or his Board of Education has read all the books they have banned. They are not notable as bookish men. The Governor himself likes to pop his suspenders and talk like an uneducated cracker on the stump. He has written no such books as Georgia's ablest demagogue, Tom Watson, wrote. Some say that the job of censorship was done by one fanatical woman in Georgia, and she seems to me to be almost a symbol of book-burners everywhere in the world.

Maybe, as Mr. McGill says, the forbidding of books in Georgia will stir a reading of books in Georgia. A good many Georgians, including thousands rejected by selective service for ignorance, would have to learn how to read first.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS *and the* ARTS

The Classic Traitor

SECRET HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By Carl Van Doren. The Viking Press. $3.75.

BENEDICT ARNOLD, like Quisling, has become a by-word. On the strength of the record so ably and so minutely presented in these pages, the popular verdict of 160 years stands confirmed: Arnold is the "supreme and classic traitor," the traitor par excellence. His villainy stands out in fiercer glare because it involved the sacrifice of a man far better and far more attractive than he, Major André. André died the ignominious death of a spy; Arnold saved his skin and collected much of his pelf. In all this, folklore and history are in perfect agreement.

The difficulty begins when we are tempted to consider Arnold as the symbol of all Americans who turned against their country. This may lead to a grievous injustice. We are still haunted with the Rousseauistic-totalitarian myth: a nation is a person, with a single heart and a single mind. Whoever works against the common purpose is not a healthy member of the body politic but a noxious growth. Many of us take this totalitarian view of the Revolution: men of every age and station marched beating the drum, playing the fife, and waving the flag, in the true "Spirit of '76"; whoever was not filled with the same holy wrath must be execrated as a traitor.

"Secret History of the American Revolution" reveals that among the Loyalists who opposed rebellion and secession not a few had to work underground, and all the more perilously, for the cause which was righteous in their eyes. This is a pretty open secret: the merit of the present work is to give in great detail the facts about a number of such conspiracies, facts "drawn from the secret service papers of the British Headquarters in North America, now for the first time examined and made public." Not only did people take sides at the beginning of the conflict; but they could change sides for reasons which were not necessarily ignoble. We can conceive of men unwilling to submit to "taxation without representation," and at the same time averse to separation from Great Britain; and we can imagine others ready to maintain their rights in what seemed at first a family quarrel, but hating the thought of an alliance with Catholic and absolutist France, the hereditary enemy. The moral problem is a delicate one. There is no cynicism in facing the fact that our judgment depends upon the course of events rather than upon abstract principles. "If West Point had been taken and the American cause lost, then Washington might in time be thought of as a beaten rebel and Arnold as the savior of his country and of the united empire."

Change the point of view, and the renegade may be termed a convert. Who among us would not praise today a German general for turning against Hitler? Who blames de Gaulle for opposing his lawful chief, the head of the French army and the French state, Marshal Pétain? Not change itself but two other elements determine our verdict. The first is personal—the motives and methods of Arnold. To break openly with one's party may be heroic; to stay with the party, to assert vehemently one's loyalty, to seek positions of influence, haggling all the while with the other side, is something totally different. The English themselves could not stomach Arnold, a convert for £10,000; I doubt whether they would have fully accepted him as an officer and a gentleman even if he had "delivered the goods." He was at one time a brilliant commander—in his own conceit at any rate a better one than Washington himself; but physical courage and professional skill are not incompatible with turpitude. Some gangsters are more daring and, in their own field, cleverer than the average citizen. Iago was a good soldier.

The more important factor is our own opinion of the cause served or betrayed. It is a merit to see the light and go over to the right side. We consider the war of secession from Great Britain as "great and glorious," and the war for Southern independence as a crime. On the surface, an absurd contradiction; if we go deeper, the antinomy disappears. The war that resulted in American independence is justly called the "Revolution," and established democracy; the war that preserved the Union was waged in the name of democratic principles. Both independence and Union are means, not ultimate ideals. The Gettysburg address remains our gospel.

The book, marshaling a multitude of facts, stirs up a multitude of thoughts. But Carl Van Doren does not indulge in political philosophy, or in individual psychology, any more than in picturesqueness. The work is a piece of scholarship, solid and austere. The author allows the facts to speak for themselves; in his case, we should have liked, once in a while, to hear his own voice. Scholars abominate romanced biography, and the general public has no use for doctors' dissertations. There is a kind of history that unites the appeal of both, and Carl Van Doren is eminently qualified to write it. He has not chosen to do so.

ALBERT GUERARD

Four Critics

THE INTENT OF THE CRITIC. Edited by Donald A. Stauffer. Princeton University Press. $2.50.

UNLIKE its predecessor, "The Intent of the Artist," this volume on criticism maintains the high pitch of interest established in the excellent introduction by Mr. Stauffer. This superiority is probably due to the fact that here is controversy about a single subject instead of parallel but uneven treatment of several arts. At any rate, we find Mr. Stauffer's threefold division of the critic's role—individual response, interpretation, systematization—gaily affirmed, denied, exemplified, or forgotten by four well-known practitioners in a spirit of serious combativeness. Edmund Wilson goes in for interpretation with the aid of history and psychology; Norman Foerster calls for ethical and aesthetic judgments as a *pis aller* for that completely scrupulous criticism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which is silence; John Crowe Ransom tells us how to make our interpretation pure by examining only structure and texture; and W. H. Auden, with a flourish of democratic trumpets, places the critic in the dilemma of choosing and teaching absolute social values or being the abettor of a "closed society."

But in addition to working out these foreseeable positions, each of the essays contains at least one instance of the critic at work rather than theorizing. Mr. Wilson, for example, seeks to make Taine appear retrospectively useful, and presents Marx and Engels as groping toward a catholic and reverent criticism of art free from the short tether of materialism. In neither of these conclusions can I follow him, nor am I convinced by his suggestion that what we know today as Marxist criticism is due to the influence of a Russian, rather than a purely Marxist, tradition. It might just as easily be shown that the close link between literature and politics is a French tradition that Marx picked up in his Paris years. But Mr. Wilson's ensuing judgments upon Shaw and Freud seem to me so just that it is a pity his essay stops abruptly on the old question of standards of taste.

Mr. Foerster's critical performance consists in a fair estimate of the reasons for the neo-humanists' failure to produce great criticism, and this he does in spite of his own leanings toward their canons of judgment. When he tells us that the aesthetic quality of "Tintern Abbey" is high but its ethics unwise, we see how and why he would have us subject each work of art to a double test, but it is not clear by what means we are to judge the ethics which we think we find in Wordsworth. Implicitly he denies the diversity of historical and individual situations, and for him the romantics broke an undeviatingly true tradition which we can only now recapture.

The same mood animates Mr. Ransom, though he bids us accept and ignore ethical matters and gives a sample of his method by analyzing a portion of "Love's Labor's Lost." To anyone who has done a traditional French *explication de texte,* the analysis is a charming and subtle example of the genre, but it remains a puzzle that the critic should think it applicable only to poetry. Is it not an old fallacy of poetic criticism to assume that all prose conveys simple information like the directions on a bottle, and is it not a further false limitation of Mr. Ransom's to think that in explicating poetry individual response, historical facts, and ethical prejudices are no part of the object? It is still an open question whether poems do not have to age, like wine, before attaining recognizable flavor, and if so, at any point of time their true being is a becoming.

On the surface, Mr. Auden is at the opposite pole from "pure" criticism with his demand that the critic teach the history of ideas and the unity of man. Indeed, the best bit in Mr. Auden's essay is his rebuke to a critic who abdicated his role and posed as a simple hearty fellow in order to condemn another's highfalutin. But with a different method Mr. Auden wants to establish through criticism a creed with properties remarkably similar to those found in Mr. Foerster and Mr. Ransom. The properties are unity, absoluteness, anti-romanticism, and discipline. Reversing democratic tradition itself, Mr. Auden attacks Whitman, Rousseau, and the pragmatists. And with a curious denial of likelihood and gener-

Books YOU ARE HEARING ABOUT!

The Keys of the Kingdom
By DR. A. J. CRONIN $2.50

H. M. Pulham, Esquire
By JOHN P. MARQUAND $2.50

You Can't Do Business with Hitler*
By DOUGLAS MILLER $1.50

Catherine of Aragon
By GARRETT MATTINGLY $3.50

Hands Off!
A History Of The Monroe Doctrine
By DEXTER PERKINS $3.50

Darwin, Marx, Wagner*
By JACQUES BARZUN $2.75

Books YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR ABOUT!

(Place Advance Orders Now with Your Bookseller)

Tomorrow Will Come*
1941 Atlantic $5,000 Non-Fiction Prize Book
By E. M. ALMEDINGEN $3.00

Botany Bay*
By NORDHOFF and HALL $2.50

101 Years' Entertainment
Edited by ELLERY QUEEN $3.00

London Pride
By PHYLLIS BOTTOME $2.00

The Brandeis Guide to the Modern World
Edited by ALFRED LIEF $2.75

* ATLANTIC BOOKS

LITTLE, BROWN & CO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

osity he warns us that he would no more trust a certain kind of critic "than I would trust a philosopher who liked Brahms or Shelley." No doubt criticism and the arts can help give us the sense of wider humanity and clearer communication that we need, but is it not strange that three out of five among our best critics wish to begin by some kind of purge? "Why," as Hazlitt asked of the exclusionists of his own day, "must everything have a foil, and our envy be bribed to let truth and justice speak?"

JACQUES BARZUN

Mark Howe, Bostonian

A VENTURE IN REMEMBRANCE. By M. A. DeWolfe Howe. Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

WITH regard to a much earlier book by Mr. Howe, John Jay Chapman once wrote to him: "Well, I must say, Mark, I never saw a book that on first glance seemed to have less venom in it." And the same deficiency in venom is discernible here. In what purports to be an account of his own life Mark Howe spends a large part of his space in making clear how much he has liked at least a hundred other people—not entirely neglecting to suggest that most of them have liked him, too. The total effect, one hastens to say, is by no means that of shallow amiability; and yet one fears that this writer has paid little attention to what Whistler called "the gentle art of making enemies." He is not, to quote Whistler again, "one of the rare few who, early in life, have rid themselves of the friendship of the many."

Perhaps this is one reason for the ease of his "translation," as he calls it, "into a Bostonian." Considered from the vantage-point of Beacon Hill, this autobiography is a success story. It tells how a clergyman's son whose schooling began as far away as Pennsylvania yet became, after long years of good behavior at Harvard and on the staff of the *Youth's Companion,* a director of the Boston Athenaeum, a trustee and historian of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, an assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* the author or editor of some forty books dealing for the most part with Boston's past, and a member of several exclusive Boston clubs.

To accomplish so much in hardly more than half a century requires, of course, a certain concentration, not to say sacrifice. What the effort has cost Mark Howe is suggested by the fact that in this story of his life he scarcely mentions any American city west of the Hudson River. With few and slight exceptions, his interest in the history, society, and literature of his native land appears to be confined, so far as the present book indicates, to the Boston region. He feels and thinks like a Bostonian, and he even writes like one. That, of course, was once a decidedly good way to write, and it becomes so again whenever a Bostonian repeats the feat of Columbus. But Mr. Howe, with all of his many virtues as a man and as a man of letters, is not a discoverer. His book has the charm, grace, and amenity that are often won by those who fully accept and share in a rich cultural tradition. It shows also the defects of the Boston tradition—excessive emphasis upon books as a means of culture, slight acquaintance with the motives and movements of American life as a whole, preoccupation with the past, and, as a consequence of these, a curious and not unpleasing kind of arrested development.

An outstanding exception to this general statement is to be found, however, in the growth of Mark Howe's social and political opinions. During his younger manhood his tendency was toward the conservatism that he found about him, but now he glories "in having parted company with the more cautious views" of his early years. Believing as he now does in the New Deal and in "the equalizing of opportunity for the many and the few," he still frequents the clubs in which such beliefs are worse than heretical, and so he has found how easy it is to "fall under a certain odium, not wholly unenjoyable, on the simple terms of differing in opinion from the majority of one's own circle." One of the prouder moments of his life appears to have been an occasion when a fellow club-member refused to sit down with him at table on the ground that he was "tainted"—with the political and social theories of Woodrow Wilson. It appears, although he does not make bold to say so, that he was on the liberal side even in the Sacco-Vanzetti debate, which may some day be more famous in Boston history than the Battle of Bunker Hill. On the whole one hopes that he was on that side, because one wishes for so good a man, the maker of many pleasant and useful books, an old age of none but pleasant memories.

ODELL SHEPARD

Waldo Frank's Latest Novel

SUMMER NEVER ENDS. By Waldo Frank. Duell, Sloan, and Pearce. $2.50.

WHILE it is relatively short, and distinctly seems to have been composed with an eye to an audience less critical than the one to which Frank's previous novels have addressed themselves, "Summer Never Ends" does not essentially differ from its predecessors. This is to say that the new book recapitulates their general defects and virtues. Again we meet a quantity of typical wilful poeticizations of the material and the style. The hero, a contemporary Conrad in Quest of His Youth, is "flashed insulated" by an air-conditioned train "through the foliaged land" while gazing out upon "the sun impassionating the trees and the trees tumescent toward the sun." Again the narrative is melodrama, moving as it does for the sake of strongly dramatic scenes rather than in accordance with the evolution of an entirely credible cast of characters. The central situation—the futile effort of an older man to win a young girl's love—is very much in the Frank tradition and points back to the author's beginnings in the *Smart Set.* And once more the melodramatic narrative periodically, surprisingly, pleasingly assumes a genuine reality.

The heroine is the type of the gray-luminous, partly sterile modern girl deprived of the capacity to respect and love men and suffused by a semi-maternal pity for them, and she is subtly and tenderly drawn. So too is the foil of the mature hero —the neurotic, unemployed young Jew who impotently clings to her. Frank always has possessed the power to penetrate states of distraction and despair, and the book presents touching fresh instances of it. The drama on the whole is tensely expressed—even though the children of the main actor, who finally save him by permitting him to reestablish affectionate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relationships with them, might appear to figure less actively than total persuasiveness would seem to require.

PAUL ROSENFELD

The Life of a Planter

THE SECRET DIARY OF WILLIAM BYRD OF WESTOVER: 1709-1712. Edited by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling. Richmond: The Dietz Press. $5.

ROBERT CARTER OF NOMINI HALL. By Louis Morton. Princeton University Press. $3.50.

IF DURING the early part of the eighteenth century there was a more important Virginia planter than William Byrd of Westover it was probably his contemporary and friend Robert ("King") Carter of Corotoman, grandfather of Robert Carter of Nomini Hall. The part of the Byrd diary now published was recently discovered in the Huntington Library in California and translated from the shorthand by Miss Tinling; later, even more intimate, portions have since turned up in Virginia and North Carolina. It gives an untouched picture of the planter's life. In it he tells of reviewing the militia, settling his accounts, loading his tobacco, writing to his agents in London, arguing with his overseers, visiting his neighbors, concocting medicines, setting out fruit trees, sitting in court at the Capitol and later at cards in the coffee house, bleeding his servants when they were sick, and whipping them when they got drunk without his permission. Dr. Morton's book is not so much a biography as a chronicle of the Carter dynasty until the end of the century. Thus the two books, read together, provide an abundance of facts against which to weigh the legend, built up by romantic writers and even more imaginative genealogists, that the Tidewater planters were fabulously wealthy noblemen who lived in sumptuous palaces and spent most of their time dancing the minuet.

If land is taken as the measure, the eighteenth-century planters were wealthy men. William Byrd held title to 179,000 acres, King Carter to 333,000, yet even these second-generation Virginians, like their myriads of descendants, were becoming land poor. Tobacco, which in the middle of the seventeenth century brought more than five shillings a pound in the London market, had by the time Byrd's diary begins dropped to a quarter of a penny. From then until the Revolution it fluctuated but never again hit the golden high that set the planters to acquiring ten times as much land as they could cultivate in a single season—so that they might have a perpetual supply of "new ground" for future plantings.

It was the power and prestige that accrued to these vast holdings rather than the noble lineage which latter-day Virginians have ascribed to their ancestors that account for the aristocratic tradition of the colony. William Byrd could prove honorable descent from the family of that name in Cheshire, but there is no record of where King Carter's father was born, who his people were, or why he emigrated to America in 1649. Yet by the beginning of the eighteenth century the structure of Virginia society was definitely aristocratic. The high offices at Williamsburg were not hereditary, but the eldest sons of the landed families, who cus-

EDMUND WILSON
NORMAN FOERSTER
JOHN CROWE RANSOM
W. H. AUDEN
contribute four essays to

The **Intent** *of the* **Critic**

Edited with an introduction by
DONALD A. STAUFFER

"A keen exposition."—*New York Herald Tribune.*
"Stimulating reading."—*Atlantic Monthly.*
"Maintains the high pitch of interest established in the excellent introduction."—*The Nation.*

$2.50, Order from your bookseller, or from
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

You may buy

BOOKS

through The Nation

At the request of many readers who reside in communities in which no bookshop has been established, *The Nation* offers to deliver any book to your door at the regular publisher's price (postfree) provided payment is received with the order or publisher's price plus postage if sent C.O.D.

Please address your orders to
The Readers' Service Division
The Nation • 55 Fifth Avenue • New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tomarily inherited the bulk of the estates and married within their own class, always managed to get appointed to them. They were carefully groomed to become the leaders of the colony. Even after they began to attend William and Mary rather than English colleges, they were still sent to London in their twenties to acquire the gentlemanly culture that they pursued diligently the rest of their lives. Every morning, as regularly as he said his prayers, William Byrd, unless interrupted by visitors in the house or some crisis reported by a distracted overseer, forced himself to read Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian, or Dutch.

These eighteenth-century planters took their responsibilities seriously, as well they might, for those responsibilities were in truth prodigious. As members of the Council of State and the House of Burgesses they acted together as lawmakers and judges of the entire colony; as individuals each ruled over a far-flung and exceedingly complex industrial empire. A Virginia estate was not a single expanse of land but a number of often widely separated tracts extending northward and westward from the thickly settled, navigable rivers to the wilderness of the Piedmont section and the mountains. Robert Carter's holdings comprised twelve plantations and sixteen tracts rented to tenants, scattered over seven different counties. By the time Byrd began his diary Negroes had generally supplanted bonded immigrants from England as field laborers, but throughout the century a successful planter required the varied services of a great many white workers—house servants, overseers, secretaries, stewards, sailors, boat builders, coalers, spinners, and millers. It was the multiplicity of occupations essential to the functioning of an estate which gave the plantation homes such an impressive and deceptively palatial appearance. There were thirty-two dependent buildings and offices at Nomini Hall, yet the "great house" about which they clustered had only eight rooms. The dining-room served the family as a sitting-room; two of the four bedrooms were reserved for, and usually crammed with, "company," for Virginians were forever staying the night with their neighbors, and not just for sociability but because of the peculiar necessity of their lives.

A planter had always to be traveling, either to Williamsburg on official business or to his plantations. He often took his ladies with him. On the way they stopped to dine and sleep, to swap gossip and the latest news from England, with their neighbors. When several families found themselves together in the home of another, the occasion was naturally enlivened by games, country dances, and general merry-making. This spontaneous, hearty frolicking, rather than the formal balls of the governor, was Virginia hospitality.

These two volumes are interesting and valuable enough in themselves, but they take on added significance when we remember that the background and training of the Carters and the Byrds were essentially those of the Washingtons, Jeffersons, Madisons, and Lees. The experience of managing a large Virginia estate proved of inestimable value in the larger task of launching a new republic. GRACE ADAMS

NEWS OF THE WORLD · FC · COMMENT FROM WASHINGTON

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

A Weekly Review of International Events

"I have found FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE an unusually well informed review on current international affairs, presenting much fresh material in good balance, particularly in the diplomatic field."
—Raymond Gram Swing.

"I have read most of the present day news letters in Europe and at home. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE is the most interesting, and for me indispensable."
—William Hillman, European Director of Collier's.

Subscription: $15 a year.
SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER:
One Dollar for Four Consecutive Issues.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE
411 Albee Building, Washington, D. C.

PUBLISHED THIS WEEK

LANDS OF NEW WORLD NEIGHBORS. By Hans Christian Adamson. Whittlesey House. $3.50.

JOSEPH PULITZER AND HIS WORLD. By James Wyman Barrett. Vanguard. $3.50.

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE OF EMPORIA. By Frank C. Clough. Whittlesey House. $2.50.

THE MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA. By Will Connell. Hastings House. $2.

THIS WAR: A SURVEY OF WORLD CONFLICT. By Philip Dorf. Oxford Book Company. 75 cents.

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. By Frederic J. Haskin. Harper. $3.

DEMOCRACY MARCHES. By Julian Huxley. Harper. $1.50.

ALFRED I. DU PONT: THE FAMILY REBEL. By Marquis James. Bobbs-Merrill. $4.50.

BE ANGRY AT THE SUN AND OTHER POEMS. By Robinson Jeffers. Random House. $2.50.

MARTHA GRAHAM: SIXTEEN DANCES IN PHOTOGRAPHIC SEQUENCE. By Barbara Morgan. Duell, Sloan, and Pearce. $6.

EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY. Edited by Newton Edwards. University of Chicago. $1.25.

BRAVE ENOUGH FOR LIFE. By Bonaro W. Overstreet. Harper. $2.50.

MUNICH PLAYGROUND. By Ernest R. Pope. Putnam. $2.75.

THE CRISIS OF OUR AGE. By P. A. Sorokin. Dutton. $3.50.

CLARENCE DARROW FOR THE DEFENSE. A Biography by Irving Stone. Doubleday, Doran. $3.

HIGH CONQUEST: THE STORY OF MOUNTAINEERING. By James Ramsey Ullman. Lippincott. $3.75.

THAT DAY ALONE. By Pierre van Paassen. Dial. $3.75.

ON ALL FRONTS. By Ralph Barton Perry. Vanguard. $1.75.

CONTRIBUTORS

ALDEN STEVENS, free-lance journalist, has contributed articles to *Survey Graphic, McCall's, Harper's Magazine,* and other publications.

ALBERT GUERARD is professor of comparative and general literature at Stanford University.

JACQUES BARZUN, assistant professor of history at Columbia University, is the author of "Darwin, Marx, Wagner," and other books.

ODELL SHEPARD, professor of English at Trinity College, won the Pulitzer prize for his biography "Pedlar's Progress: The Life of Bronson Alcott."

GRACE ADAMS is the author of several books on psychology and of a sociological study entitled "Workers on Relief."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DRAMA

The Fires of Spring

AT ITS own playhouse the Theater Guild is presenting Eugene O'Neill's "Ah, Wilderness" as the first of a series of revivals to be drawn from both the recent and the more distant past. A bolder beginning might possibly have been made, but the choice is a good one nevertheless, for the play not only stands up well but seems to me solider than it did when I saw it first some seven years ago.

What struck me most then about this genial and tender remembrance of things past was its remoteness from both the temper and the subject matter of O'Neill's other plays. Here, I thought, is a comedy purely local in its reference instead of a tragedy out of space and out of time; here is local color instead of abstract grandeur; an episode illustrative of American cultural history instead of the eternal predicament of the human spirit; here, in a word, what O'Neill himself once called a story concerned purely with the relation of man to man rather than with the relation of man to God. If one did not know, I said, who had written it, one might easily make a dozen false guesses before hitting upon the true one.

But this last is, it seems to me now, a wild exaggeration, and the play unmistakably O'Neill's despite the fact that it is still unique among his works. No doubt it is first of all a comedy of wistful sentiment, and no doubt it does focus attention upon the local aspects of its situation—the struggles of an adolescent trying to grow up in a community where even the kindliest of families is compelled to accept a social tradition based upon the assumption that really nice and really respectable people never do grow up, never do fairly face the fact that not all human nature fits comfortably into the narrow framework provided by the accepted stages in the uneventful progress from school days, through a suitable marriage, to responsible parenthood and the grave. But the play is not merely either "Main Street" or a Gay Nineties costume piece in the manner of "Life with Father."

Nothing is more characteristic of O'Neill than the fact that even when he chooses, as he often does, a subject which various of his contemporaries are also choosing, he manages to make of it something quite different from what any of the others have made of it. "The Hairy Ape" might have been merely another proletarian play, but it isn't; "Desire Under the Elms" might have been merely another debunking of puritanism, but it isn't. And the case with "Ah, Wilderness" is similar. It is not merely that the observation is freshly accurate or that the sentiment is real and touching. Beyond that lies the fact that the eternally valid aspects of the situation are not obscured by the local ones, that what we are led to ponder is not merely Main Street's suspicion of Swinburne and Oscar Wilde, but the enduring problem of the soft virtues versus the hard ones, of the place of pride and passion and self-assertion in a universe which cannot manage to dispense with sentimental loyalty, unselfishness, and simple kindliness as well. The production given at the Guild Theater is fully good enough to exhibit the virtues of the play and to make it one of the few exhibitions now current in New York really worth an effort to see. It is not, however, conspicuously fine, and it tends to be broad where it should be subtle.

George Abbott, whose interest in the problems of education has previously been revealed in such studies of scholastic life as "Brother Rat" and "Too Many Girls," now comes forward with another musical comedy with the scene laid at a senior prom and entitled "Best Foot Forward" (Ethel Barrymore Theater). Standing Room Only is already, I believe, the rule, and the fact is not particularly surprising since the new show is marked by the same innocent liveliness one has come to expect in his productions. Mr. Abbott seems to have decided to leave political satire in such hands as those of the Messrs. Kaufman, Hart, and Ryskin, to leave sophistication to Cole Porter and sultriness to the employers of Ethel Merman, while he himself concentrates on youthful exuberance. But even if the picture of school life isn't exactly a triumph of photographic realism, there is actually a kind of adolescent gaiety about the whole thing that is decidedly agreeable.

As for Bobby Clark in "All Men Are Alike" (Hudson Theater), I can only say that I have for twenty years considered him one of the funniest comedians alive and that I am particularly grateful to the present performance for making it clear to me what certain old-timers mean when they insist that in their youth the talent of the actor rendered the general badness of the plays hardly noticeable. A farce could hardly be more primitive, more fatuous, or more crudely written than the present one—the English success "Women Aren't Angels" under a new and if possible even less distinguished title—actually is. The general manner is that of a considerably less expert "Charley's Aunt," and it is hard to believe that it was written in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Mr. Clark, by disregarding as far as possible plot, dialogue, and the other dramatis personae, manages to be hilarious. Nobody else in the world can parade in a union suit with such defiant grace, and when he shows someone his wife's picture with a desperately defiant gesture which sweeps the photograph from the pocket past the eyes and into the pocket again with a speed eloquently describing how long he thinks her worth looking at, one wonders if the importance of the whole literary tradition of comedy from Congreve on hasn't been grossly overestimated.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

RECORDS

THE fidelity, spaciousness, and clarity that made Columbia's September recording of Enesco's Rumanian Rhapsody outstanding among its own American orchestral recordings are to be heard again in this month's set of a performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 by Mitropoulos with the Minneapolis Symphony (469, $6.50). And I would like to believe that the changes in recording equipment and technique which produced these two first-rate recordings will make an end of the sort of thing Columbia has been issuing during the past year or two, of which the examples this month are the ear-lacerating sound of the performances of Shostakovitch's Symphony No. 1 (Set 472, $4.50) and Tchaikovsky's Overture "1812" (Set X-205, $2.50) by Rodzinski with the Cleveland Orchestra, the hollow, nasal sound of Barlow's performance of a Suite from Deems Taylor's "Peter Ibbetson" with the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony (Set X-204, $2.50).

One thing that remains for Columbia to remedy is whatever produces the noisily swishing surfaces of side 9 of my copy of the Mahler set, and side 7 of the new Busch Quartet set of Beethoven's Op. 130 (474, $5.50). Not, I must add, that it is only Columbia that has this to remedy: I have reported occasional swishing surfaces on Victor records; and someone has told me of one such surface being replaced

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOK BARGAINS

Choicest Book Values! Free U. S. A. mailing.

Audubon's The Birds of America, with 435 color plates of $2.50 ed. improved..... $4.95
The Escoffier Cook Book (2973 recipes)..... 2.25
Hanna, Crane, & The Mauve Decade: Thomas Beer (3 complete books in one)..... 3.75
Wind, Sand and Stars: A Exupéry (2.75 illus. ed.)..... 1.59
The Complete Book of Ballets: C. W. Beaumont 1.98
The Human Body: Logan Clendening, M.D. ... 1.89
Rejected Guest: Richard Aldington (novel).... .50
Meet General Grant: W. E. Woodward..... .50
Understand Human Nature: Alfred Adler.... .50
Roget's Thesaurus: Peter M. Roget (705 pp.).. .50

See previous NATION for more titles

Prompt service on all new and current books.

DOWNTOWN BOOK BAZAAR, 212 B'way, N. Y. C.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of The Nation, published weekly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1941.

STATE OF NEW YORK } SS.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Hugo Van Arx, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the business manager of The Nation and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:
Publisher, The Nation, Inc.
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Editor, Freda Kirchwey,
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Managing Editor, Robert Bendiner,
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Business Manager, Hugo Van Arx,
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is:
The Nation, Inc.,
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Freda Kirchwey,
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

HUGO VAN ARX,
Signature of Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1941.

[SEAL] JOHN J. DIAMOND, Notary Public

My commission expires March 30, 1942.

There are more than 33,500 readers of *The Nation* doing what you are doing—reading this advertisement. If you have something of interest to offer them—call *The Nation Advertising Department* for particulars as to space, cost and closing date of the next issue.

•

THE NATION
55 Fifth Ave. New York

by one that turned out to be even worse.

The excellent recorded sound was one surprise of the Mahler set; another was the excellent performance—the first outstandingly good performance I have heard from Mitropoulos on records or in the concert hall (and not enough to make the prospect—of which there are rumors—of Mitropoulos as permanent conductor of the New York Philharmonic anything less than appalling). As for the symphony, it is like a first moderate-sized model for the huge ones that followed—with much the same sort of ideas, not all of them good, and the same sort of structure, but less well integrated.

The performances of Tchaikovsky's "1812," Shostakovitch's Symphony, Taylor's Suite seem good. But Shostakovitch's music, as compared with Taylor's tripe, is merely tripe of a different kind produced by a man of greater musical talent, and tripe for reasons that have to do not with Shostakovitch's talent but with his emotions.

Listening to the Busch Quartet's set of Beethoven's Op. 130 I was surprised by the excellence of its performance of the first movement in musical conception and style and in ensemble execution, in which it stood well the comparison with the Budapest Quartet's performance in the old Victor set. But in the third and fourth movements the Busch group's playing lacked the grace of the Budapest's; the fifth-movement Cavatina suffered from Adolf Busch's curious excesses of tone and phrasing in the twelfth to fifteenth measures, his flat, almost inaudible playing of the stammering melody of the middle section; and striking throughout was the contrast between the wooden tone of the Busch cellist and the dark, luminous beauty of the excitingly inflected line of sound created by Mischa Schneider. And so although the Budapest performance is less well reproduced than the Busch it remains the one to acquire.

On a single disc (71208-D, $1) is Mozart's exquisite Rondo K. 511 for piano, insensitively played by Guimoar Novaes; on another (71210-D, $1) Johann Strauss's "Wine, Woman and Song," not one of his best, played without the customary exaggerated changes of pace by Weingartner with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, and only moderately well recorded.

The rest later.

And my investigation of machines has been slowed up by current difficulties in production.

B. H. HAGGIN

The Undiscoverables

[*Continued from page* 370]

tering his men with an imperative gesture, leaped on to the Archangel.

"And put out your light instantly."

Luca promptly whistled to the lightman. When he began to apologize to the lieutenant, Nicolino gruffly ordered him to be silent. Paterno obeyed. Even Ferrarello obeyed Nicolino's orders with promptitude.

"You are to return to harbor at once. And for your information, I have replaced Margarone as harbor master. I shall excuse your insolence since you did not know. Get to it."

Insolence! thought the Archangel's crew, commenting upon the lieutenant's word. This outburst of Nicolino's had seemed like sheer rebellion to them. Nicolino gave orders to retrieve the nets. While they were doing so the lieutenant's men freed their screw, and the cutter raced away. Now the sea was dark. Presently the two boats from the tail of the fleet drew near and cut their motors. The Archangel's men cried out that their net had been broken and silently the two boats pulled over and set about retrieving the net.

"Blazing hell, this is too much," Nicolino shouted as the torn net was dragged over the roller at the stern. "He calls himself a harbor master, and he tears up his own nets. What in Christ's name? They're all the same, these landsmen. Haven't we got enough troubles without having city trash spewed out on us to support. Blazing hell! What will this Varchi do for us? Bring us a Jew to bait? What was wrong with Margarone?" Pirtuso kept up his angry protest against the politicals throughout the gathering of the net. One of the men finally silenced him and put fear in the hearts of the crew.

"Listen, Nicolino. Mori isn't a stranger and he has long ears and a heavy fist."

"Mori," Nicolino muttered, and bawled angry thanks to his helpers. The three boats joined the slowly moving fleet.

For two hours the motors knocked and the black shapes moved over the sea toward the vanished town. High on the hill one yellow light alone gleamed faintly near the chapel of Our Lady.

"Rosaria Grisafi, the crazy one," Ferrarello said. "She's lucky to be crazy. She won't know that our beloved Italy is at war." No one replied to the sarcasm. Luca Paterno began to whine

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about the hardships that lay ahead of them because Nicolino had put the Archangel in disfavor with the new harbor master. "Stop beating your breast," Ferrarello scoffed. "Plenty with worse troubles than you, and Nicolino will wriggle you out of it."

"Who has worse troubles? You?"

"Maniscalco, that big-mouthed goatherd, for one. It entered his head to be disrespectful to Mori's clique. That means he's finished. What are *you* going to do, go over to the decadent Frenchmen or the plutocratic English? Excuse me if I make a song about it. I'm peevish because we haven't any fish."

Ferrarello played his mandolin, sneering at Paterno in clumsy rhyme. Presently he began to make verses, in the past tense, about Maniscalco the Goatherd who had defied the Fascisti and died cutting throats, as one Calogero the Bandit had done to the *Carabinieri* of Italy long ago.

The leading boats slowed down as they neared the harbor, and finally, as the funeral-like procession fell into disorder, the forerunners stopped their motors. The thirty-four boats lay rocking upon the low swell. The dark roofs of the town, clustered around the enormous and ghostly church, were faintly visible in the starlight.

"We oughtn't to have gone out today," Pirtuso abruptly said, and Ferrarello laughed mockingly. Again Pirtuso snapped at him. "Like you to laugh, wastrel."

"Thinking of what Mori will have to say? The fun's over, eh?"

"I'm thinking San Filippo wouldn't miss you if you took a trip to Lipari," Nicolino exclaimed savagely. The crew were on Pirtuso's side. The mandolinist made no response, but the fisherman's anger was not calmed.

"You and your good-for-nothing mother who couldn't keep her husband. A useful pair!" Long ago Ferrarello, the carpenter, had abandoned his wife.

The crew understood Pirtuso. On this day they should have remained with their families, now waiting for them within the blackened town. The very lightlessness and silence of the town oppressed them and awakened alarms. From this distance, even at this late hour, they should have heard its petty noises. Its harbor lights and the soft glow of the street lamps should have given them sign they were returning to a living place of men. San Filippo might now have been an abandoned town, stricken by plague long ago, inhabited only by bats and ghosts.

"And what do you dumb dolts know of my mother and me?" Ferrarello suddenly remarked. They had all forgotten the mandolinist and his disreputable mother. "And what do we care for you? Nothing, in both cases. She's a no-good like me? She brawls, she sings at the top of her voice any time she has a mind to, she swears? She doesn't wear stockings? She keeps a dirty house? What if she does? I'm not saying she doesn't. To blazing hell with you all! What are you, anyway? Mori scares the living Jesus out of you. I —— on you." Into Ferrarello's bored and sneering tones passionate contempt had entered, confounding the fishermen. The mandolinist often jeered at his slatternly mother in their own terms.

"Why don't we get going?" Paterno querulously demanded, standing up and looking around at the halted cortege.

"And why don't you? Because you're scared. You've come running home out of the dark with your tail between your legs, to your stinking little houses, to be cuddled by your mamas."

"Mouth shut," Pirtuso said fiercely and punched the mandolinist on the side of his head.

"That's it," Ferrarello said venomously. He lay on his back, his knees drawn up over his stomach. "You thought it'd be all nice and cheerful. And instead, you've turned up at some foreign place and your rotten bowels are all turned to water. How terrible!" Ferrarello rose and plunged to the stern of the boat and fumbled with the motor until Nicolino thrust him aside and wound the cord around the flywheel and pulled it impetuously. The motor stuttered and barked. Within a few moments the fleet was in motion.

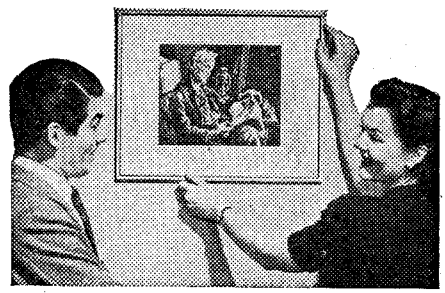
The motor's knock became hollow and the short echoes resounded as the Archangel entered the harbor. Without order the engine was stopped, and the boat moved slowly on her momentum toward the lightless quay. Along the black walls the people of San Filippo stood, vaguely silhouetted against the sky. The people were silent. Then, as the noise of mooring ceased, the fishermen heard the quiet murmuring of the dark multitude.

[*To be continued next week*]

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

THE NATION, 55 Fifth Ave., New York. Price 15 cents a copy. By subscription—Domestic: One year $5; Two years $8; Three years $11. Additional Postage per year: Foreign, $1; Canadian, $1. The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Index to Labor Articles, Public Affairs Information Service, Dramatic Index. Two weeks' notice and the old address as well as the new are required for change of address.

What! only $5 for a SIGNED ORIGINAL by THOMAS BENTON, the great American Artist!



Yes, *Incredible* but *True!* You too can own SIGNED ORIGINAL ETCHINGS and LITHOGRAPHS by BENTON, CURRY, GRANT WOOD and 64 other GREAT AMERICAN ARTISTS... for only $5 each

(Normal value $18 to $36)

UNBELIEVABLE but excitingly *true!* For only five dollars each, many dollars less than actual value, you can hold in your hands, hang on your walls museum-perfect Signed Original Etchings and Lithographs . . . by such noted American artists as Thomas Benton, John Steuart Curry, Luigi Lucioni and 64 others.

Each original is limited in edition—each is identical to many actually acquired from this very same collection by such great museums and collections as the Metropolitan Museum, U. S. Library of Congress, Chicago Art Institute and scores of others.

THESE NOTED ARTISTS

Thomas Benton
John S. Curry
George Biddle
Gordon Grant
Peggy Bacon
Ernest Fiene
Adolf Dehn
George Grosz
Doris Lee

. . . AND MANY OTHERS
See Free Catalogue

Send Coupon for FREE Catalogue

Write at once for your *free* copy of the amazing 64-page catalogue from which you may order direct. It illustrates 187 subjects (suitable for any decorative scheme), many of them prize-winners, gives each artist's biography, etc. Each work is guaranteed perfect; if not completely satisfied, your money will be refunded. Enclose 10 cents in stamps or coin with the coupon for postage and handling. Address:

ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS
STUDIO N, 711 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

Associated American Artists
Studio N,
711 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Please send me, FREE, the 64-page catalogue illustrating all Signed Original Etchings and Lithographs, with vestpocket biographies of all artists, prizes they have won, etc. I enclose 10c in stamps or coin for handling and postage.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters to the Editors

Reactions to Chaplin's Hitler

Dear Sirs: Jonathan Daniels, when he went to see Charlie Chaplin in "The Great Dictator," seems to have left his imagination behind him. I don't object to that, but I do object to his assuming that "the country boys and country girls, women, and men" see the picture as he saw it.

Last spring, because I was interested in other people's reaction to this movie, I asked my composition classes at Indiana University what they thought of it. A good many of the first-year students in a large state university are the sort of people Mr. Daniels wrote about in his article. They felt that Hinkle did some funny things, but not one of them got the idea that therefore Hitler is "just a funny little guy." Indeed, several of them said that the picture satirized Hitler very effectively, and they wished that it could be shown throughout Germany to wake the German people up. They made no blanket identification of Hinkle with Hitler; their response was more subtle than that. They realized that the picture's chief point was a suggested comparison between Hinkle's inability to rule his country wisely and Hitler's.

I think that Americans have seen enough movies to know how to take them. I doubt that many thought of the storm troopers as "actually nothing more than Mack Sennett cops." Many more, I believe, were shocked at the brutality of those "cops."

Mr. Daniels says that the movie is "calculated to minimize the threat from Hitler" because it makes Americans think that Hitler is funny and therefore nothing to worry about. My students didn't see it that way. Several of them who felt that we should stay out of war at all costs said it should be banned from the screen because it aroused hatred for Hitler. Others admired Chaplin for his courage in presenting it to an American public which wanted above all to keep out of war.

If Mr. Daniels is right in his theory about people's reaction to "The Great Dictator," how does he explain the fact that it was poorly attended in the Middle West? It would have been welcomed there had it minimized the danger of Hitler. And why did the English greet it with open arms? Mr. Daniels should not assume that his own reactions are like those of the small-town, country American.

LEE ELBERT HOLT

Bloomington, Ind., October 8

September in the Hills

Dear Sirs: Tucked away in the hills, alone, without much contact with political opinion, I turn the last page of each tardily read copy of *The Nation* with wistful reluctance. To read Niebuhr, Stone, Fischer, Kirchwey, *et al.,* for an hour is all one needs of the outer world for a week. What if our national affairs are so sadly mishandled! I've never known them to be otherwise; no, not in the past forty years.

An aged neighbor is planning how to provide against the winter months: shelter, with not too much of the chill winds leaking through the cabin floor; food, even though meatless days run thirty to the month; fuel, if some stout and charitable neighbor will cut it to length for the stove she hopes to get. Her nearest neighbor looks forward to milking five new cows to raise his weekly milk check from the present six or seven dollars to, perhaps, ten or twelve. But to have his milk accepted he must put a concrete floor in the barn and lay a thousand feet of pipe line from the spring to the cooling-trough in the milk house. He'll have no one to help him, and it will be hard to break the pipeline trench two feet deep through the rocky ground. But the month of September has been wonderful and the apple trees are loaded with their fruit.

On another farm the boy is over his sickness, going to school again, but the board won't agree to send the bus up the farm road. "He'll have to trudge through the two miles of drifts again this year." But this has been grand weather for getting the corn in; last year it froze, not only here on the hill but also down on the river flat.

I don't like strikes or what causes them, or strike-breakers. I don't like the greed and cynicism of great corporations. America Firsters, Christian Fronters, Coughlinites, Bundists, and Communists are all annoying. I'm against Japan and the appeasement thereof. But I do like *The Nation,* and September here in the hills has been wonderful.

EMORY L. KING

Pepacton, N. Y., October 1

New Army Wants No A.E.F.

Dear Sirs: There is a movement afoot—and do not make the mistake of minimizing its size, intensity, and spread—among members of the new civilian army to unite in a stout, sincere demurrer to another A. E. F. To prevent this movement from becoming a possible tool for trouble-makers and enemies of the state, we have and want no formal organization, no leader, no headquarters, no slogans. It is not so much a movement as a spirit—the honest desire to stay in America to defend America and not be exported to fight the wars of other nations.

Our abhorrence of Hitler and his formula has no bounds; and our sympathy for the British people is all out. But if the situation is so taut, why—to use a single example—did not those who are nudging us to the brink of participation use their office months ago to have automobiles taken from the assembly line and airplanes made in that swift production? If America must sacrifice, let it begin with luxuries.

We are desperately in need of a spokesman. Swivel-chair patriots spin about and boast, "Gentlemen of the press, we are ready to fight anyone, anywhere." But we who do the murderous work of execution have no voice. We who have been gathered to defend democracy are without representation.

Callous, cowardly, communistic—we can see the words crowd us like a pack of wolves circling a weaker adversary. But we want all America to know that until the fight is directly and honestly ours—and this we have not been shown—we'd rather live in America than die abroad.

A PRIVATE

San Miguel, Cal., October 10

Not Serving Japan

Dear Sirs: To the rather pointed question in your editorial notes on October 11, "Are Norwegian and Dutch tankers still being used to fuel the Japanese?" the answer is, in the first place, that the remaining two Norwegian tankers in the Japan trade were withdrawn last February, and, in the second place, that no Dutch tankers are serving Japan.

BJARNE BRAATOY, Norwegian Shipping and Trade Mission

New York, October 10

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED